Nixon's Bad Year—a Summing Up *John Osborne*

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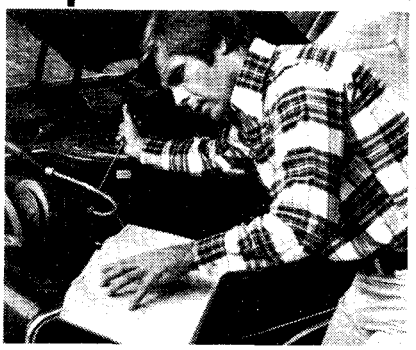

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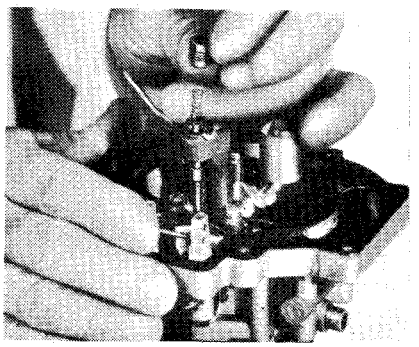

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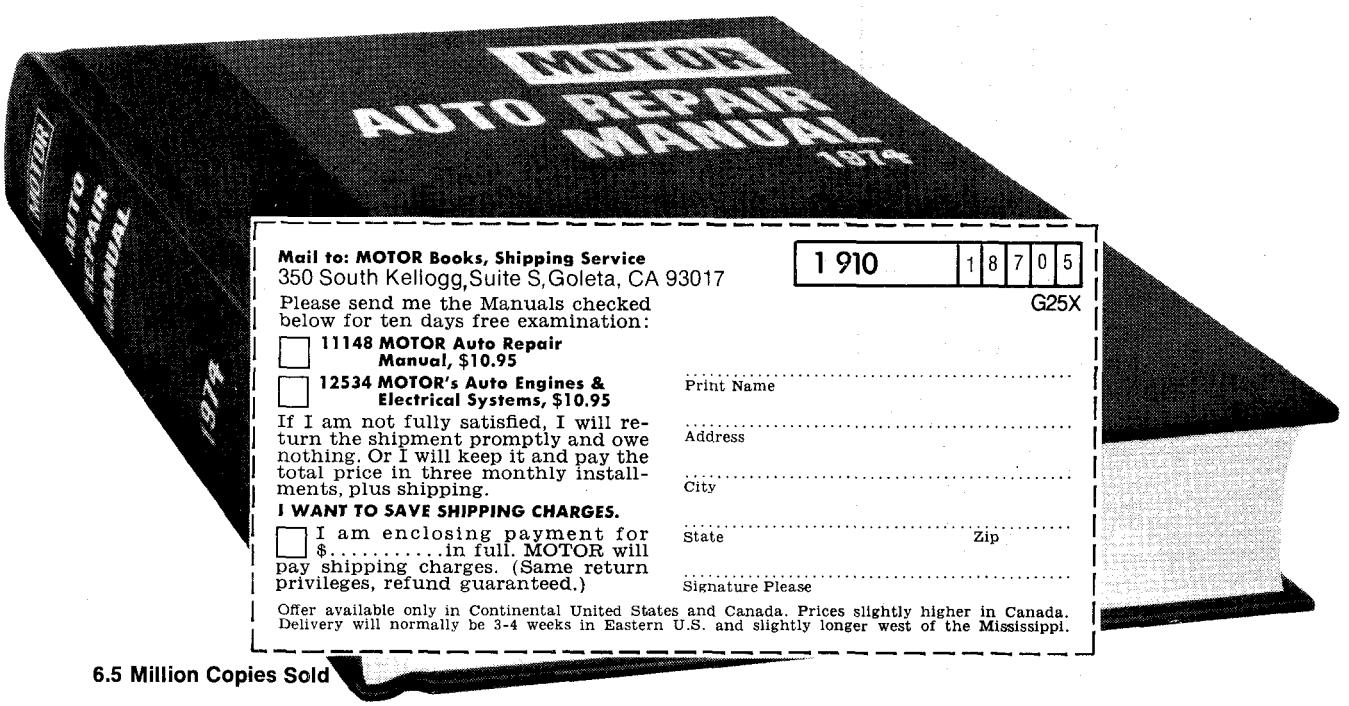

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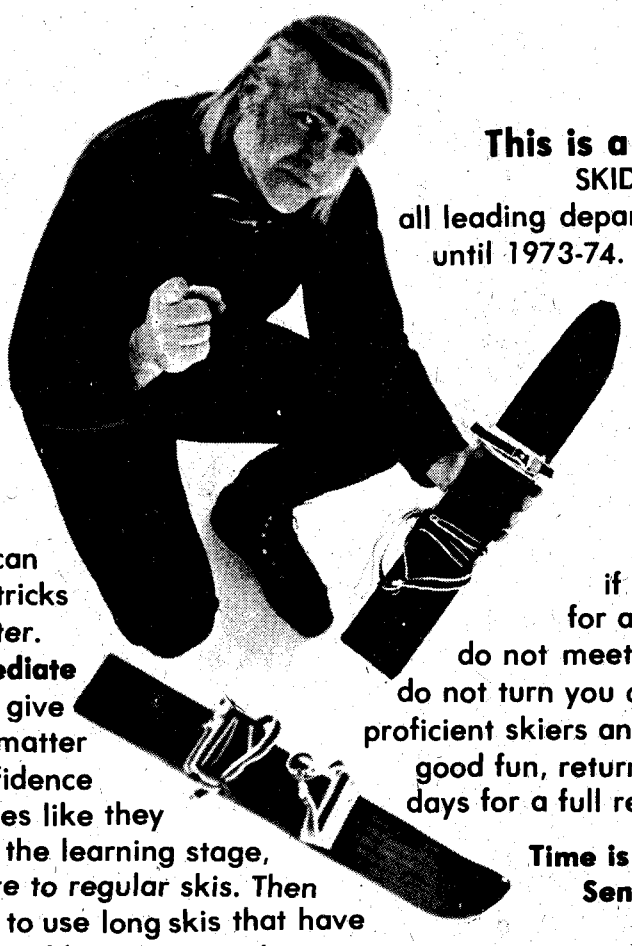

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from Washington
January 5, 1973

Farewell to All That

There was economic euphoria a year ago. On January 11 Mr. Nixon gave business a gaudy New Year's present: he ended Phase II controls on corporate prices. The stock market hit 1051.70 on the Dow industrial index, highest in history. The newly elected President was riding high. On January 2 he had resumed the "Christmas bombing" of Vietnam. There were critics. Indira Gandhi expressed "horror"; the Swedish king called it "merciless"; Willy Brandt said relations would "deteriorate"; the Canadian House of Commons, in an unprecedented action, unanimously "deplored" the US attack.

Who cared? Look at the election returns! Mr. Nixon grimly faced the Democratic Congress as he prepared his budget. "Massive handouts to people" must stop, he said in an interview; doles made people too dependent. As for Vietnam, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird explained comfortably that Vietnamization was now complete and that South Vietnam henceforth was "fully capable" of defending itself. So that worry was over.

There was, of course, inflation. Pentagon sources said that the cost of the Christmas bombing alone was half a billion. The Nixon economists didn't worry. Government budget costs would be cut, particularly welfare costs. In his Inaugural, January 20, Mr Nixon gave a reverse twist to the famous Kennedy saying; as Mr. Nixon put it, "ask not just what will government do for me, but what can I do for myself." (His income tax returns would come later.)

The budget message January 29 was a caution. The President proposed no new social program, but cuts, or elimination, of 112 current programs, among them landmark education and aid legislation going back to Truman. He brought in young Howard Phillips to dismantle the Office of Economic Opportunity, the poor man's agency in Washington.

The annual economic report January 30 spelled out the good news. Wise administration policies were curbing inflation and the President hoped for a rate of only two and one-half percent or less by January 1974. Dr. Herbert Stein couldn't resist a little chuckle of complacency in the scholarly treatise: "By the end of 1972," he wrote, "the American anti-inflation policy had become the marvel of the rest of the world." The operative word was "marvel."

On February 12 world pressure forced America to devalue the dollar 10 percent, the second time in 14 months.

That 13-day leap from "marvel" to "devaluation" set an economic track record that, we guess, will stand for a long time. Things got worse after that.

Let it be said, in fairness, that national economic forecasting is a hard business. It is surrounded by luck and no presidential adviser has a perfect score. About the best we know is Walter Heller, who in the early '60s helped produce the longest period of sustained economic growth with price stability in history. It got out of control, alas, with LBJ's Vietnam inflation.

The record of the Nixon advisers is miserable. They haven't guessed what would happen, and they haven't been able to protect the poor and the weak. The fact is, I believe, that the administration is the most regressive in modern times. The gap between rich and poor has widened, and this may be worse for the nation, in the long run, than Watergate.

Herbert Stein and George Shultz abhor government controls; they are sincere and put faith in the free competitive market—a faith that might work under laboratory conditions but that has failed repeatedly and dangerously in the real world. Here is the record:

► President Nixon, while business boomed, dogmatically opposed any tax increases that might have soaked up inflationary buying.

► He and his economists triumphantly abolished the successful Phase II controls a year ago just as the price roller-coaster started.

► Protectionist quotas against import of oil were continued despite growing warnings; for example last January 17 the director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness declared, "We're going to have a tight fuel situation all winter." There were spot gasoline shortages all during last Memorial Day weekend.

► The Nixon staff woke one day to find that the USSR had bought one-quarter of our 1972 feed grain crops; Russia paid a subsidized $1.50 to $1.60 a bushel, when a year later the price would be $4.80 a bushel.

► Today the same team is resisting the use of strong government action that seems almost inevitable in a severe, developing inflation-recession. Consumer prices are advancing at a near-record seasonally adjusted rate of 9.6 percent, and unemployment lay-offs are beginning to knock at industry after industry.

That's the story. A recent poll shows 76 percent now believe "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." They are right. Corporate profits in the past year have soared. At the same time workers are on the treadmill—making more money that will buy less food, less services and less consumer goods. The official figures show a 3.3 percent decline in "real earnings" (after taxes and inflation) from a year ago. That's an average of maybe $3.25 a week (the price of a workshirt say, or having shoes repaired), or $170 a year. Not something to hit the headlines, maybe, but multiply it by a work force of 70 to 80 million and it means the loss of billions in purchasing power. It's tougher on the poor and the destitute whose food is a larger proportion of their budget. Food prices have jumped 20 percent.

The White House energy czar, William Simon, has recruited several hundred oil company experts to advise him. Presumably once more the corporations are going to be looked after. In a shortage, it's the meek who inherit the dearth.

We don't mean to be cruel about it, but this year at income tax time a lot of us are going to be thinking of Mr. Nixon and tax loopholes. In four years' incumbency, his net worth rose from $307,000 to a million and his taxes on a quarter million income were equivalent only to those of a family with income of $15,000. He has always hated taxes. Like Truman's, his motto was, "the buck stops here."

It is a coincidence of some political importance, perhaps, that the House will be considering impeachment this year just about April 15; that's Form 1040 time.

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Wastrel of the Western World

"A man used to vicissitudes," said Dr. Johnson, "is not easily dejected." But what of a mighty nation that is not used to having its bottom pinched by Arabs, its dollar upstaged, its nuclear dominance challenged, its technology excelled by the Japanese, its productivity increasingly dependent upon outsiders, its stocks going down along with the prestige of its President, while its prices and unemployment go up? We are not accustomed to being paddywhacked. We turn to the past for reassurance—a sign of age—because it is so unsettling to contemplate the future. Yet the invocation of past glories is as unsatisfying as the patriotic bumper stickers, the American flags on coat lapels, or the prospect of a bicentennial national celebration. We can't go back to 1884, and we don't want to go forward to Orwell's 1984. So we must live as best we can with the realities of 1974. One of those realities is dwindling resources, including that unnatural resource—civic wisdom.

First, natural resources. Nothing more will be said here about oil. Many words have been printed in these pages on that subject, and more are said by Professor Ulmer in this issue. The oil scarcity is an inconvenience, not a catastrophe. Other shortages, we are told by Lester R. Brown of the Overseas Development Council, may be more threatening. In 1960, he says, the United States was import dependent on only four of 13 key raw industrial commodities—aluminum, manganese, nickel and tin. Today, zinc and chromium are on the list. By 1985 we will have added iron, tungsten and lead, and by the year 2000, copper, potassium and sulfur. That would leave only phosphate in plentiful domestic supply.

What of food? The poor notwithstanding, Americans are among the most abundantly fed, if not always the best fed, people in history. Farm output is up, but not as much as world population. And that is a warning signal because the United States, for humanitarian and practical reasons, cannot isolate itself from the nutritional needs of others. The two percent annual world population growth means that food production must double by the year 2000 if widespread malnutrition or starvation are to be avoided. Prosperity compounds the problem, for the richer countries become, the greater demand from their people for better diets, based mainly on meats and other proteins. There will be a rising demand for more animal feed, for grains, and there are only four significant grain exporters today—the US, Canada, Australia and New

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Zealand. In a culture with a predominately cereal diet, the average person consumes 400 pounds of grain a year. In a society such as ours that prefers meat, the average grain consumption is 2000 pounds a year. In 1940, Americans consumed 55 pounds of beef a year; in 1972 more than 120 pounds. Fish? We are told that world supply has been declining since 1968, and some marine biologists believe that the global catch of table-grade fish is at or near the maximum sustainable level and that a number of the 30 leading commercial species of fish may be already overfished.

It ill behooves a nation that has a per capita gross national product of $5530 to grumble or to pity itself. Anyway, self-pity is no cure for dejection. The salutary response is to put our minds and our money on what we need, rather than what we fancy. In a recent commentary in *Business Week*, Stephen E. Shepard notes that "low-energy cost has permitted the US to be astonishingly profligate with the earth's natural resources. Buildings were designed to minimize capital cost, and nobody counted the kilowatts needed to heat, cool and light them. Cars became two-ton chariots guzzling gas as they carried their lone occupants from downtown offices to suburban homes that sprawled so far and wide no mass transit system could serve them effectively. The US became a throwaway society finding it cheaper and more convenient to disregard broken toasters than to fix them, to buy beer in unreturnable cans [60 billion throwaway soft drink and beer containers were produced in 1972, according to *The Washington Post*] and to dump thousands of tons of metal on the garbage heap rather than recycle them."

We are social wastrels, spending $2.7 billion a year on air-conditioning—roughly the combined gross national products of Bolivia, Congo, Liberia, Haiti and Guinea—while millions of our aged lack proper care. What can be said of our sense of proportion when gross sales of the US tobacco industry are roughly the same as our public investment in higher education—close to $14 billion a year? Consider also our excessive expenditure in fiscal '73 of $17.5 billion for offensive and defense strategic nuclear forces which, if ever used, would guarantee mutual annihilation. And consider the estimate of a Brookings Institution staff report that projects an expenditure on these forces between now and 1980 of $160 billion. How much security is there in spending more and more for a big stick that can never be swung? We paid out $9.7 billion in 1972—slightly less than the gross national product of New Zealand—on canned and frozen foods, neither of which was known to Americans a century ago. We trade in our cars as if they were box tops, an estimated 4.1 million trade-ins annually. The kitchen towel, usable again and again, may soon become obsolete: about a third of a billion dollars a year are spent on paper towels for the home. Place alongside that figure, $232 million in federal cash outlays in fiscal '72 for urban mass transportation. Or contemplate the $17.5 billion Americans spend annually for over four billion gallons of beer, wine and hard liquors—more than one-fourth of India's GNP—and India has over two and a-half times our population.

COMING: Herbert Scoville, Jr. discusses US defense policy and the possibility of a new arms race

We can tinker with technology. Mr. Shepard in *Business Week* has some practical suggestions along this line: "Instead of disregarding such energy-intensive products as metal cans and plastic packaging, communities will find it profitable to recycle or reuse them. An aluminum can, for example, can be recycled for five percent of the energy needed to make a new one." He also says that "the quest for higher productivity may shift. Until now, industry has sought labor-saving machines—in effect, substituting energy for people. But the scarcity of both energy and material could alter the trade off." Such recommendations for conserving or recycling or changing our modes of production are useful, but they do not reach the heart of the problem—an economics of indiscriminate expenditure. We tolerate the shoddy product, because the shoddier it is, the sooner it will have to be repaired or replaced; it doesn't matter what's made, so long as someone is paid to make it. The gospel of the marketplace is that the more we consume the richer we are; waste and triviality equal prosperity. Thus, we spend six to eight billion dollars on cosmetics, toiletries and fragrances, and less than one-fifth that on subsidizing low-cost housing. No matter that 6.9 million American families have physically inadequate dwellings.

J. K. Galbraith once wrote that "social thought in the industrial system does not allow of inquiry as to whether increased or more efficient production of a particular product is a good thing; it is, *per se*, a good thing." It is only the poor country which must "exercise firm control on the nature of its growth [and] use its capital in accordance with a well-considered plan." America is far from becoming a poor country, but the need for a more rational allocation of resources is nonetheless imperative. That won't be done by big business, big labor or the marketplace. Just as our leaders are beginning to adjust our foreign policy to the limits of our global influence, so they now must begin to adapt our public and private investment policies to the limits of affluence at home.

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Give Us Our Gas

When, on December 12, the Federal Energy Office announced its plans for allocating fuel, it received more than 5000 "comments" about the harm that would be done to one business or another. The angriest cries came from aircraft owners and builders, primed by a remark in one of the President's energy messages, later corrected, in which he said that fuel for private airplanes would be cut back by 50 percent. As one aviation expert at the energy office says, "We don't know where that figure came from, whether some speechwriter threw it in or the President grabbed it at the last minute to show that something was really being done." Regardless, the figure threw small plane owners, manufacturers and pilot training schools into a tailspin and the protests that followed had an effect on the White House. The government conceded that a 50 percent cut was too harsh; the energy office declared that fuel for recreational flying would be reduced only to 70 percent of the 1972 level and fuel for private business flights to 80 percent.

Although gasoline rationing isn't official yet, the energy office has already announced a system of allocation to wholesalers, and this has elicited a thousand or so comments and complaints. There are many in this group who feel they have been singled out for unfair treatment, notably ski lodges, sports industries (AMF Voit is extremely unhappy) and motels (a Best Western in Jasper, Florida reports that its occupancy rate had dropped from 75 percent to 20 percent because of gasless Sundays). The new regulations are stiff on all "recreational" use of fuel.

The Environmental Protection Agency has repeatedly expressed concern that not enough fuel has been allocated to garbage collectors and other solid waste processors. The Meat Institute is worried that meat packers won't get what they deserve, the Brick Institute is worried about brickmakers, the American Automobile Association about tow trucks and the National Newspaper Association about paper deliverers.

The largest volume of protest against the gasoline regulations comes, however, from the operators of armored cars. Their operators did not make the "priority list" because they don't fit any of the four categories: emergency services, agricultural production, transportation or energy production. But as hundreds and hundreds of banks have said, the country's financial system could not do without them. Checks and business papers could not be processed without armored cars, and a slow-run of deliveries would slow the nation's financial pulse. People who pare their budgets close to the bone would not know whether a check written on Thursday would reach the bank Friday or Monday. The delay might give the debt-weary a rest, but it would give the banks a headache.

An imaginative protest has come from a manufacturer of flour and cookies. John Haaland, Ph.D., director of Pillsbury's "Environmental Systems," wrote to the allocation office to fret about gasoline supplies for his salesmen: as a food producer, Pillsbury has a right to 100 percent of the gasoline it needs, for whatever purposes, he said.

Bell Telephone has proposed the creation of a fifth category of "priority use": telecommunications. Given this change, Bell trucks and company representatives would get all the gas they could use. The United Parcel Service has suggested another category called "Priority Transportation Service," under which the United Parcel Service and the United States Postal Service would be guaranteed 100 percent of the gas they need. The Florists Transworld Delivery Association insists that it represents an industry of "intensive agricultural production" employing many low-income workers. Florists need all the gas *they* can get, the association says, because their business depends on quick delivery. Furthermore with the "curtailment of travel and recreation," flowers can "brighten conditions where people are living and working under subdued energy conditions." A national association of bakers wants the government to remember that they produce the "staff of life," and Actors Equity has reminded the government that "man does not live by bread alone."

The National Funeral Directors Association has asked for a change in the rules that would grant priority status for transportation of the dead as well as the living. "The number of deaths are [*sic*] increasing annually in most areas of the United States," its director says, "as the number of individual funeral establishments decreases." Therefore the "use of a vehicle for the removal of a dead body and any other transportation associated with such body up to and including final disposition should be deemed a public health and/or emergency use."

Vietnam Build-up

In Saigon one day back in the early 1960s I was drinking with a US army information officer at a dockside café when I noticed, coming into sight down the river, a huge US aircraft carrier laden with helicopters. The Kennedy administration was pretending at the time to be observing the Geneva agreement's ban on shipping military equipment to Vietnam, and, although everyone knew that the pledge was being violated, I pointed to the aircraft carrier as a rather blatant transgression of the accord. The officer stared at the vessel, now growing larger as it approached, and replied placidly: "I don't see any aircraft carrier."

Under the terms of the cease-fire agreement signed

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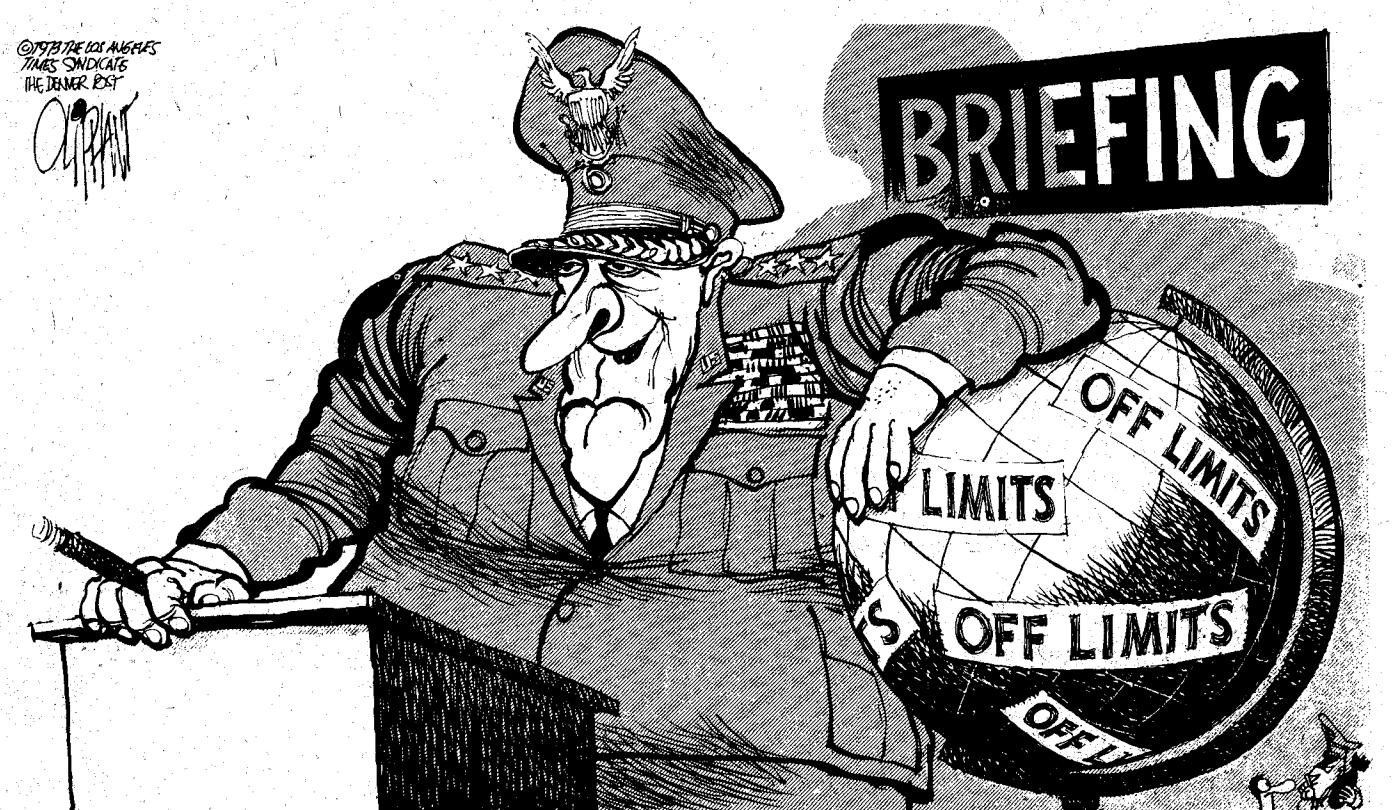
in Paris last January, the Nixon administration pledged to provide the South Vietnamese regime only with "periodic replacements of armaments, munitions and war material . . . on the basis of piece-for-piece," these shipments to be theoretically monitored by the Saigon government and Vietcong representatives on the Joint Military Commission and the Indonesian, Iranian, Polish and Hungarian members of the International Commission of Control and Supervision. But US officials, like my dockside drinking companion of more than a decade ago, currently refuse to disclose what military hardware the administration is actually sending to Vietnam.

Recent attempts by journalists including myself to obtain official information on the extent of the US supply effort to Vietnam have been rebuffed by both the State and Defense Departments, and members of Congress have met with the same obstacle, even though such details are supposed to be public. A few weeks ago, for example, the Pentagon rejected a request for information from Rep. Les Aspin of Wisconsin on the grounds that it is "classified and unauthorized disclosure would be injurious" to South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu's government. The letter of rejection, signed by Assistant Secretary of Defense John O. Marsh Jr., said that the information had been given to the Armed Services Committee. A check with the committee revealed, however, that it had received no such information.

Bits of evidence from assorted sources suggest that an enormous flow of military equipment is still pouring into Vietnam despite the President's assertion "peace with honor" has been reached there. One reason that the administration has fought to continue subsidizing its Vietnam operations through the special Military Assistance Service Fund rather than through regular channels is, as former Pentagon Counsel J. Fred Buzhardt admitted in a letter to Budget Director Roy Ash last spring, to make the expenditures "less visible" by spreading them "through the various Defense Department accounts." Starting in May 1972, as the possibility of a cease-fire was anticipated, the administration launched Project Enhance, under which the South Vietnamese were delivered large quantities of airplanes and helicopters, tanks, armored cars, naval craft and, besides personnel weapons, such sophisticated hardware as the TOW antitank missile. Six months later, after Henry Kissinger announced that "peace is at hand," the administration initiated Project Enhance Plus, an accelerated quarter-billion dollar program under which Thieu was given additional equipment, including more aircraft than he could use. The purpose of these intensive programs was to lay down the foundation for "piece-for-piece" replacements, but, it appears, supplies are being sent to Vietnam without regard for the levels set by the Paris agreement. For instance, the administration is currently planning to replace Saigon's F-5As with F-5Es, a superior model that might have been designated differently had not the Pentagon considered it expedient to camouflage the airplane with a similar number. The Air Force has also been asking for increased supplies of bombs for Southeast Asia. It recently requested $35.5 million for 38,359 CBU-52



"The bombing is now finished . . . well, we've heard all that little story before, haven't we . . .?"

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cluster bombs, 9400 more than it purchased this year, and $24.6 million for 36,000 CBU-52 2000-pound bombs, 16,750 more than it required in 1973. When Rep. John McFall of California noted during House appropriations hearings in September that "we are replenishing war reserves at a faster rate of procurement" than during the Vietnam conflict, Air Force General Jonas Blank answered in Pentagon jargon that the objective is "to protect a Southeast Asia contingency capability that we had not previously planned."

Meanwhile, some administration military spokesmen have been issuing tough statements amid reports that the North Vietnamese may be preparing to step up the fighting in Vietnam. On August 17, two days after the US bombing of Cambodia stopped as the result of a congressional amendment ordering an end to American air activities throughout Indochina, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger warned Hanoi that the administration would support South Vietnamese forces from the air "in the event of overt North Vietnamese aggression." Echoing that threat on November 1, the commander of the US forces in Thailand, General John Vogt, said that "now that we're not actually dropping bombs, we must maintain our capability to resume such action if we have to."

Kissinger has promised to advise Congress before any new military moves are undertaken in Vietnam. It is difficult to forecast how Congress might react. Some senators say that they would bar the use of US forces; others argue that their decision would depend on the situation. Most significantly, though, neither Congress nor the public knows how close we are to returning to Vietnam, and, in that respect, we recall the days when we were sending aircraft carriers up the Saigon river and claiming them to be invisible.

Stanley Karnow

The Nixon Watch

A Bad Year

Here is how it was at a few points and with a few people around the White House toward the end of the first year of Richard Nixon's second term, a year that promised to be a time of accomplishment and triumph and seems likely at this writing to be the last full year of the Nixon presidency.

John K. Andrews Jr., a young writer of presidential statements who quit in early December after four years on the Nixon staff, left a farewell missive that he entitled "Memorandum for an honorable company of friends from a departing scrivener." Because of what it says and reflects, the memorandum is more important than its author was at the White House. Andrews is a quiet sort, intense and reserved, a Christian Scientist, a true believer. At the White House he avoided reporters, partly (I gathered) because they tend not to be true believers. He appeared to resent their cavalier attitudes toward the President. I once read a confidential account of a meeting between Mr. Nixon and some visiting admirers that Andrews had written "for the President's file" and I thought it repellently slavish. Andrews discussed with a few friends on the staff his reasons for quitting and what he should and shouldn't say in his goodbye screed. He made it starkly plain to them that he'd finally had more than he could take of Watergate and all that it signified. In late 1973, he told them, things got to the point where it was difficult for him to put his heart in the work any more. Behind this simple and common disillusionment was a mix of feelings and motives that perhaps can be fully credible only to people who have worked for Richard Nixon and have committed themselves to him as completely as John Andrews had. It is difficult, close to impossible, for believers such as Andrews to conclude that their trust has been totally misplaced. He and a good many others at the White House clung to a notion that their President could exonerate himself if he had the wit to do it and, therefore, that his fault was a matter of ineptitude and not of guilt. In anguished conversations with his friends, Andrews maintained that the President could have moved more effectively than he had to clear himself and that his failure to do so had unnecessarily damaged him, his presidency and the country. It was this failure, Andrews indicated, that he could no longer tolerate and forgive.

Some of the foregoing was intimated but none of it was stated in the Andrews memorandum. Andrews omitted overt strictures because he didn't want to aid and comfort those who, in his view, were taking advantage of Watergate and its associations to tear down Richard Nixon. What Andrews omitted makes what he chose to say more interesting. Before quoting the references to Mr. Nixon and his situation, however, I quote a passage that documents a rarely documented point about the Nixon White House. It is staffed in part by people who have the same sense of religious mission that John Andrews has, whatever their formal religion may be, and who truly believe (or have believed) that in serving Mr. Nixon they serve a cause that is at once righteous and bigger than themselves. As the President has suggested, one of the consequences is a fervor that may do more than any theory of simple villainy to explain some of the Watergate excesses. After noting that he was about to move to Denver and "become Director of Communications for Adventure Unlimited, an organization which conducts a Christian youth ministry in this country and abroad," Andrews told his White House colleagues: "This perhaps is not as sharp a career turn as it looks since it seems to me, as Senator Hughes has put it, that a prime means of improving government and society is to

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strengthen individuals' spiritual reliance. So we'll still be on parallel paths and I hope to keep in touch." His reference to Senator Hughes is to Harold Hughes of Iowa, who is leaving politics for Christian labor. Adventure Unlimited is a Christian Science endeavor and Andrews' father is its chairman.

The righteousness, the self-pity, the apprehension and the desperate need to believe themselves to be honorable servants of an honorable leader that are evident among Nixon assistants after 18 months of the Watergate horror throb out from the Andrews memorandum. Its central portion follows: "The President recently likened himself to a ship captain in stormy seas, and an admirably brave one he is. Carrying out the metaphor, I'd only say that he's damn fortunate to sail with a crew with as much dedication and principle and grit as you on the staff have shown even in heaviest weather. Up ahead, the steadiest star that I can see to steer by is our own 1968 statement [in a Nixon speech, though Andrews didn't say so] that the Presidency is preeminently a place of moral leadership. Held to that course, this Administration, which has already brought the nation and the world so far with often so little thanks, cannot fail to make safe port. Great endeavors risk great errors, as we have learned to our pain; but the forces they loose are certain to unmake the unworthy and only deepen character in the best. In that confidence, I am of good cheer and full of hope for America." The recipients noticed that the expression of hope for America was not accompanied by a similar expression of hope for Mr. Nixon.

Other departures are imminent; some of them have been announced; and all of them have been or will be interpreted as rejections of Mr. Nixon, flights from association with him, or both. In the few instances of impending departures known to me but not announced, this interpretation is incorrect. It is possible, after all, for good people to get tired of working in one place for five years and to want a change. Raymond Price and Lee Huebner among the President's staff writers, and Richard Fairbanks on the Domestic Council staff, intend to get out when they can do so with no or minimal damage to the President. Former Congressman and Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, who said when he became a counsellor to the President last June that he'd stay for "at least a year," made it official that he's quitting as of February 1. Lacking any factual basis for doubting that Laird has been as useful to the President as he (Laird) claims to have been, particularly with legislation and the nomination and confirmation of Vice President Gerald Ford, I note the claim and observe that Mr. Nixon cannot be overcome with sorrow. Laird, bent upon magnifying his own importance, let it be known months ago that the President didn't really like him or want him around and tolerated his advent only because powerful Republicans insisted on it.

It's disgraceful of me to deal with such petty factors in a time of stress and torment, but I can't resist reference to a couple of other comical aspects of Laird's brief tenure at the White House. He and Henry Kissinger hate each other's guts. Kissinger, who hadn't been appointed Secretary of State when Laird joined the Nixon staff, correctly assumed that Laird would insist on being made a member of the National Security Council and would do what he could to diminish Kissinger's preeminence in foreign affairs. That turned out to be very little, Laird's foreign policy responsibilities being mostly figments of his yearning, and Kissinger soon sealing his supremacy with his dual status as assistant for national security affairs and Secretary of State. The other relationship in mind here is Laird's with Bryce Harlow, who has been in and out of Republican White Houses since the 1950s and, in his intervals of private employment, represents Procter & Gamble in Washington. Harlow, who returned to the Nixon staff last summer on a Watergate rescue mission, and Laird frequently insult each other in terms that cannot be provably shown to be intentional insults. Laird, for instance, seemed to be aglow with affection for a cherished friend when he was asked on December 19 about reports that Harlow is leaving the staff and replied that "every time Bryce Harlow has come to the White House, he has always been leaving and he has always established that the first day he got here." It's true, but it's not the kind of thing that a friend says about a friend at a press conference.

Bryce Harlow's story that he's intended since last summer to leave the Nixon service around this time doesn't wash. What he's previously said, to my knowledge, has been that he'd go back to Procter & Gamble and to the large amounts of money that he is reported to earn there when his presence at the White House is no longer considered to be indispensable. Harlow speaks of indispensability in a tone of wry deprecation that acquits him of unacceptable vanity. If he is in fact considered to be dispensable, one of two conclusions is indicated. Harlow may have concluded that Richard Nixon is beyond saving. Or Mr. Nixon may have settled upon a course known to Harlow and to very few others that makes it unnecessary for Harlow to stay around much longer. What I'm saying, with no support except fallible intuition, is that Harlow may know, sense or suspect with overwhelming force that Richard Nixon has decided to resign when and if he judges that the alternatives to resignation are impeachment by the House of Representatives and conviction by the Senate.

Despite their reputation for influence with Congress —a reputation that Harlow has the grace to laugh at— both of the departing staff counsellors must know that they and any arguments that they may offer will have little or nothing to do with the outcome of the impeachment process. The outcome will depend upon the revealed facts and, more importantly, upon the

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public's perception of the facts. The massive disclosure on December 8 of statistics and assertions bearing upon the President's tax history and financial resources proved to be a crushing disappointment to his associates and presumably to him. Instead of quieting the questions and cynicism, the disclosure fed them. Before the negative impact of the December 8 exercise sank in, White House reporters were told to expect further disclosures. There were to be transcripts of subpoenaed Watergate tapes; White House data concerning the dairy industry and the benefits it got from the Nixon administration; documents related to the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation and the breaks it got in antitrust litigation; and facts about the domestic surveillance operation that the President initiated in 1970. A hiatus occurred. There were no further disclosures, when they were intended and unofficially promised, before Congress took its Christmas recess and prepared for the prospective horrors of 1974.

The President's spokesman said during the week before Christmas that he wanted to go to Florida for a few days of warmth and rest but hadn't decided whether and when and how he'd go. The bind on him was the energy crisis. His choice was a train or a small jet or the Boeing 707 jet that he usually rides. The choice was tightened upon him by White House reporters who got what they asked for when they raised questions about the jet fuel (2800 gallons, and so what?) that the President's plane consumes on a flight from Washington to Miami. I'm told and believe that it was at Mr. Nixon's instance that his spokesman said okay—no press plane chartered by the White House transportation staff, no hotel rooms reserved for the press by the transportation staff, no hire-cars reserved for the press by the same staff. Climactically and with special vengeance, no "pools" of reporters and photographers would hereafter accompany the President on trips to his Florida and California homes. The employers of the reporters, cameramen and assorted electronic technicians who travel with the President at first-class rates pay for the accommodations arranged by the transportation staff. Somebody, presumably the involved head of household, pays at cut rates for the transportation on the Florida and California trips of hordes of spouses and squalling offspring. I've long thought this to be a damnable imposition on writing journalists who are compelled to travel in the airborne hell of the coach sections unless they out-race the cameramen and technicians, a remarkably successful breed of seat-grabbers, to the few first class seats. The point here is not the trivial intra-professional rivalry and the misogynistic sentiments so far indicated, for which I offer no apology. The point is that the media, beginning with but not confined to the 100 or so souls who style themselves "White House regulars," have demanded and accepted help and favors from successive White House regimes that shouldn't be demanded. The current reminder, probably induced by the meanest motives, that the favors are not grounded in the Constitution and are subject to withdrawal ought in my opinion to be welcomed.

Somewhere back in this report, I said it was disgraceful of me to deal with petty matters. I promised my editors and they promised in the previous issue of this journal that I'd be reviewing Mr. Nixon's bad year. Well, what in God's name is there to say except that 1973 was a bad year? The little that I hear from people and the much that I hear on television and radio and read in newspapers tells me that there is nothing—absolutely nothing—that I can add to the general perception of Mr. Nixon. Except this—presumably and fantastically addressed to people who don't read *The New Republic*. You voted for him. Unlike the editors of this journal, I'd have voted for him, too, over George McGovern, if I hadn't just got off a Nixon press plane when the polls were about to close and been busy writing that we had voted ourselves four more years of Richard Nixon. In my opinion, the impeachment process was not intended by the framers of the Constitution and shouldn't be used to correct the errors of the electorate, absent the most compelling evidence that the President is a felon. Friends say, who would you vote for today, Nixon or McGovern? It is an idle question. The relevant question now is, Nixon or Gerald Ford? I'll take Ford.

John Osborne

Play It Again, Sam

Babble on the Tapes

Almost five months after they were first subpoenaed, the last of the White House tapes—or what was left of them—were turned over to the special Watergate prosecution force on December 21. The prosecutors did not get all they originally asked for. Of the nine taped conversations sought, two (a June 20, 1972 telephone call from the President to his then campaign manager John Mitchell, and an April 15, 1973 evening conversation between Mr. Nixon and his then White House counsel John Dean) are now said not to have been recorded. A June 20, 1972 meeting between the President and his two top advisers, John Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman, contained an obliterated 18 minutes; the blank was all the prosecutors got since Judge John Sirica upheld a White House contention that what was left on the tape had no connection with Watergate. A June 30, 1972 meeting of the President, Mitchell and Haldeman that lasted over two hours was cut down to slightly more than a five-minute tape segment; the rest, said Judge Sirica, had nothing to do with Watergate. Seventeen minutes of a fifth tape, that

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of a September 15, 1972 meeting of the President, Dean and Haldeman, was snipped off by the judge. So we now have only four allegedly untouched tapes, out of the original nine.

However the controversy is far from over. A special board of technicians is studying the June 20, 18-minute obliteration to determine what caused it. Haldeman's notes of that day's meeting appear to confirm that the missing discussion was devoted to the Watergate break-in that had occurred three days earlier. The technicians have already tentatively rejected as unlikely a White House explanation that the President's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, accidentally caused the so-called gap by pressing the record button while taking a phone call. The technicians are also examining the other tapes. Once the technical reports are in, Judge Sirica will first decide what is to be done about the mysteries surrounding the two missing tapes and obliterated segment of conversation. Normally when material subpoenaed by the government is missing or destroyed, a grand jury inquiry is undertaken. That option is still open to Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski, once Judge Sirica has concluded his inquiry. A review of the transcripts of the Sirica hearings show that further investigation would be justified, since there are still some key conflicts in testimony.

Where was the Secret Service on April 15, 1973, when the tape supposedly ran out in the recording system covering the President's EOB office?

Alexander Butterfield, the former Nixon assistant who helped set up the White House recording system, testified that Secret Service technicians were always on duty with the President, weekday or weekend. It was well known, he said, that when the President remained in Washington over a weekend, he spent most of his time in the EOB office. On Saturday, April 14, 1973, the President had over five hours of meetings in that office. The Secret Service, which follows Mr. Nixon's every movement, had to be aware of those meetings; their technical services men—who supervised the White House tape system—also knew that a tape reel holds only six hours of conversation. Since the President was staying in Washington the next day, April 15, did the Secret Service check the EOB tapes when the President left that office at 6:45 pm, the evening of April 14? There were then only minutes left on the tape reel. According to the White House, the tape ran out during the President's first meeting the next afternoon. When Secret Service agents testified early in the Sirica hearings, they were not asked who was on duty that key weekend. Butterfield told reporters it was inconceivable that the tape was accidentally permitted to run out.

What happened to the nine subpoenaed tapes the first three days that Rose Mary Woods says she was typing the "gist" of each one?

Nixon attorney J. Fred Buzhardt says he does know what she was doing on September 28, 29, 30 and October 1, 1973, when she went to Camp David to begin typing what she says were to be summaries of the nine tapes. Presidential chief of staff Alexander Haig, who ordered Buzhardt to supply a list of tapes to be given Miss Woods, says he did tell Buzhardt at the time why the tapes were needed. Miss Woods testified she spent 30 hours trying to type the "gist" of the June 20, 1972 meeting between the President and Ehrlichman—a session that lasted only 55 minutes. Someone who since has heard that same conversation said the "gist" could be got by listening to it once. A word-for-word transcript would have taken two or three replays in certain parts, but 30 hours, says this source, "never."

Miss Woods also says the President only came by once, for five minutes or so on September 29, the first day she was typing. He listened to the tapes briefly in order to see how difficult they were to hear. White House logs show the President met with Miss Woods in the morning, then for 30 minutes late the afternoon of September 29, in the latter's cabin. During that half-hour calls were made by the President to both Buzhardt and Haig. Presidential aide Steve Bull testified he told the President and Miss Woods on September 29 that he could not find the June 20 telephone conversation between Mr. Nixon and Mitchell. Bull's notes so reflect that finding. Miss Woods can't remember that. General Haig can't recall being told that weekend that the April 15 conversation was missing.

Perhaps the most significant joint failure of memory came over the tape obliteration. Miss Woods says it happened on Monday, October 1, the day after the Camp David weekend. She says she asked to have her phone calls screened to hold all but "essential" ones so that she could work on the tapes. But a call did come and, according to Miss Woods, she pressed the record button rather than the stop button on the tape machine and apparently kept her foot on the pedal so the machine kept going. Miss Woods could not remember who called and added there was no record of it. How were her calls screened if operators did not keep records?

Miss Woods says she waited a few minutes until the President was free, then went into his Oval Office at about 2:15 pm to tell him of her mistake. The President's logs show that he was in his EOB office at that time—not in the Oval Office. According to General Haig Miss Woods must have told the President sometime during the *morning* of October 1. So the parties have no common recollection of the event, two months after it happened. The White House logs show that minutes after the President met with Miss Woods that afternoon he took an hour's drive around Washington with General Haig. The general has denied the tape erasure was discussed during the unusual drive.

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The record abounds with other conflicts deserving scrutiny. On November 14, 1973 the President's special counsel for the tapes hearings, Miami lawyer Samuel Powers, said firmly the subpoena required disclosure of the obliterated tape. Up to that time the White House position, attributed to Buzhardt, was that it need not be disclosed. On November 15, with Powers' position in mind, the Haldeman notes were found and proved the obliteration covered Watergate conversation. That news was given the President around 7 pm, November 15, before his meeting with 40 Democratic congressmen, part of Operation Candor. The President was described as tense and at one point made what was called a "frightening" statement about his power to unleash nuclear weapons in the face of a Communist threat. The next day, November 16, the President met with his new lawyer, Mr. Powers, for the first time. According to Powers—whose decision to make public the tape obliteration was uppermost in everyone's mind—Mr. Nixon never mentioned either the erasure or even the tapes controversy. Two days later Powers went to his home in Florida and to the hospital with pneumonia—an illness that delayed for another four days public disclosure of the obliteration.

Why didn't Miss Woods tell the court about her erasure when she first testified November 8, 1973? Indeed she was quite feisty when it was suggested she could make a mistake in handling the tapes. Miss Woods' lawyer implied later she was directed to avoid mentioning the erasure. Miss Woods said she was told she did not have to talk about tapes that were not covered by the subpoena, and she had been told the obliteration was on a nonsubpoenaed tape. Who told her that? She couldn't remember. Mr. Powers said he did not tell her, and neither, apparently, did Mr. Buzhardt. Could it have been the President?

The question of who had the tapes and when is still open to debate; its resolution is important because suspicions about tampering persist. For example Haldeman and Dean disagree on what happened at the close of their March 13, 1973 meeting with the President. Haldeman says he was there only at the start of the meeting. Dean says Haldeman was there at the end, when money to the Watergate defendants was discussed. Steve Bull's notes, made at Camp David September 29, 1973 when he was arranging the tapes for Miss Woods to type, originally carried this notation on the conclusion of the March 13 conversation—"Dean leaves, Haldeman remains." A line has been drawn through those words. Why? Could that line have been lopped off the tape?

Haldeman was given some tapes July 10, 1973. He says Buzhardt or Haig suggested he review them. Both deny it, Haig going so far as to say he was "disturbed" when he found Haldeman had been given tapes. I did not want these things moved without my knowledge in the future . . .," he told the President.

It is time for a careful investigation, directed by the special prosecutor, using the best of the FBI, to determine whether there has been an effort to obstruct justice with regard to the tapes. The doubts should not be left unresolved.

Walter Pincus

Captains of Our Fate

The Oil Masters

by Melville J. Ulmer

We resent the Arabian producers because of the inconveniences and high fuel prices we are suffering, but hardly a word is heard about the international cartel that has so carefully regulated the world's supply of petroleum, dividing markets and fixing prices, ever since the first and infamous Achnacarry Agreement of 1928. On the contrary, the administration, Congress and the public look for succor to our corporate petroleum giants, the leaders of that cartel. They are invited —ardently implored—to exploit the nation's public lands (containing more than half the United States' oil reserves) just as swiftly as they can, and never mind the environment. They are promised generously higher prices as incentives, not only for oil but for natural gas and coal, in which years ago the same companies had prudently secured a dominating interest.

Though prices of petroleum are already 90 percent above a year ago, the Cost of Living Council last week saw fit to raise the selling price of crude oil by another 24 percent. Nor has either Congress or the administra-

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tion yet contributed more than lip service to the noble objective of "taking the profit out of a national disaster." President Nixon's proposed "emergency windfall profits tax" is simply an excise tax on crude oil, nowhere near as large as that on cigarettes, that can be passed conveniently on to consumers. Even so, the President suggested that the tax might well be refunded to those patriots who "plowed back" some of their gains in "energy producing" investments.

Wrath against the Arabs for international blackmail is not unjustified, nor is the new US "war of independence" to loosen us from reliance on foreign sources unreasonable or quixotic. But both mask the fact that the United States can never be secure in its supply of energy until it controls the controllers. Those controllers—Exxon, Standard Oil of California, Texaco, Mobil, Gulf and a few other "major" producers—rank high among the 100 largest industrial corporations in the United States. They have acquired such enormous wealth and wield such awesome power, enough to strike fear in the most courageous of statesmen, that when necessary they can mobilize the machinery of government in the service of their balance sheets. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "The trouble with this country is that you can't win an election without the oil bloc and you can't govern with it."

The central fact of the petroleum industry is that the demand for its product is "inelastic." Its inelasticity means that the demand is built in our cars, roads, the configuration of our cities and suburbs, and our heating plants. Hence, even when the price of petroleum is raised out of line with other prices and incomes, the quantity purchased barely declines, if at all. So long as the oil barons can maintain discipline in their industry, as they regularly manage to do, it *always* pays to keep prices on an upward track. The opulence of the return is further enhanced by the skyrocketing energy requirements that can be counted on to boost demand from year to year. Promoted by commercially calculated waste as much as our wealth, the United States consumes about a third of the world's annual petroleum supply. In a single generation our total energy consumption has tripled, while that of the rest of the industrially developed world is catching up. It is no bolt out of the blue, then, to learn that profits in oil are the lushest of all, that several great American fortunes built up in this century mostly derive from oil, and that the influence this industry wields in government is second to none. The profits in 1973 of Exxon, which (in assets) is the largest industrial corporation in the world, were 50 percent above the year before and have doubled in eight years.

Because of the inelastic demand just described, it is financially advantageous for petroleum producers to keep their customers a little hungry. Here, government has cooperated magnanimously. The Hot Oil Act of 1935 enables the major producers to exercise collective control over the nation's output with the obsequious assistance of state agencies. A waiver of the antitrust laws permits them to integrate fully from oil wells through pipelines, tankers, refineries and retail outlets. The same governmental benevolence encourages them to buy up the sellers of potentially competing fuels, especially coal, and to join with British, French, Dutch and Italian companies in international "consortiums." Import quotas, administered by complaisant government officials, serve to crown the perfection of their control over the nation's energy supply, and hence of the prices at which it sells. No wonder, as Middle East expert Christopher Rand relates, the oil companies are able to "sell gasoline wholesale at 21 cents a gallon when it costs them only four cents a gallon to provide it." To cap the financial bliss of this sector of our free enterprise system, the 22 percent depletion allowance virtually absolves the oil companies from the corporation income tax.

The oil industry has been carefully planned, but in the interest of monopoly profits not the public. For example, the 22 percent depletion allowance is calculated on gross income from *oil production*, not refining. This arrangement stimulates the integrated producers to maximize their tax saving by keeping prices of crude oil at the wellhead abnormally high. Since they "sell" much of the crude oil to themselves, this tactic is no inconvenience. However, aside from the tremendous saving in taxes, it also yields another significant contribution to their financial welfare. For the majors sell part of their crude oil to independent, nonintegrated refiners. By hiking its price they can squeeze these potential competitors at will, narrowing their profit margins until they cry "help!" Help means sell-out or merger. Between 1950 and 1967, according to the Federal Trade Commission, the majors in this way absorbed 73 large independents with aggregate assets of more than six billion dollars.

The various tax benefits oil companies have received, like the higher prices they are now getting, have been justified as incentives for domestic oil exploration. They have indeed encouraged exploration in the past, but in foreign countries more than in the United States. That outcome is expedited by a convenient provision of the law that permits our producers to treat as "taxes" the royalties on oil output exacted by Middle Eastern countries. So interpreted, the royalties are creditable, dollar for dollar, against taxes the producers might otherwise owe the US Treasury. Meanwhile, even before the embargo, the normally low cost crude oil pumped out of the Middle East was sold at fat prices largely *outside* the United States.

Such observations take the zing out of the noble aspiration that by 1980 we may be free of reliance on foreign oil reserves. If all goes as planned, we may remain, as we are now, in bondage to the oil barons. Maybe more so. For they are being offered access to

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the precious resources—offshore and onshore oil, oil shale and carefully developed techniques for coal gasification—still owned by the federal government. They are being enticed almost at any price, with almost no restrictions, to exploit them to the full.

In illustration of this point, over the last two weeks alone substantial tracts of oil shale in Utah and of geothermal land in California were turned over for private company bids by Interior Secretary Morton. The leasing of rich oil tracts off the coast of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida was accelerated over the objections of environmentalists. The Interior Department also revealed, reluctantly, that for 20 years it has been allowing Southern Oil of California and other majors to drain the Naval Petroleum Reserves by drilling near their boundaries in an apparent violation of federal law. Getting in on the act, the coal industry (with close financial links to oil) pledged last week to increase output by 10 percent in 1974, provided work safety as well as pollution standards were waived and the unions promised not to rock the boat.

In toto the oil shale on public lands is calculated to contain 350 billion barrels of oil, approximately equivalent to all Middle East resources, and enough by itself to satisfy our requirements for more than 40 years at the *1980* expected rate of consumption. But of course so huge a mining operation, in its entirety, will not be necessary in the foreseeable future. For there are other enormous unexploited and accessible resources in the United States, Canada, the North Sea, the Barents Sea and elsewhere. Moreover, once readily available reserves are there, we will have no valid reason for not buying inexpensive Middle Eastern oil, which in the longer run the Arab countries will be forced to sell at prices in line with those of the rest of the world. Through the foreseeable future, the Middle East will remain dependent on others for the refining, transportation and marketing of their product. Finally, it is almost inconceivable that we, and to a lesser extent other developed countries, will go on in our profligate way, wasting energy, polluting our cities and ourselves, at the same astronomical rate as we have in the past. More mass transportation, smaller cars, more functional architecture, use of nuclear or solar energy where feasible, and similar economies are virtually inescapable.

The most stubborn and serious problem in oil promises to be institutional rather than technical. With the oil barons in command, and given their expertise at public deception and contrived scarcity, how can the American people be assured of an adequate fuel supply at reasonable prices? Regulation by government seems no more effective than hiring Boy Scouts to rout out the Mafia.The oil moguls have demonstrated their talent for cowing or confusing public officials, whether in the Interior Department, the state oil prorating agencies or the White House's Office of Emergency Preparedness. Nor has any government official, concerned with "truth in advertising," ever dared to suggest that the oil companies reveal the homogeneity of gasoline—the treasured trade secret that all gasoline of the same octane rating, like all aspirin, is the same regardless of the label under which it is sold. The consuming public isn't even permitted to learn the octane rating. In research for this article I found that basic statistical information on the oil business, available from federal officials, is limited to the sketchy bits that the major producers from time to time have been willing to disclose.

Stronger measures are necessary. The most promising measure known to me is not without precedent or present supporters. It relates to the use of government enterprise as a yardstick for the performance of private enterprise—one of the seminal ideas introduced in the New Deal, though its initial formulation appeared in an article by Walter Durand in *The New Republic* of May 26, 1926. Among the very first elements in President Roosevelt's plan for recovery and redevelopment, the Tennessee Valley Authority had as one of its major objectives the production of public power as a competitive check, and also a cost standard, for assessing and influencing the service of private, monopolistic electric utilities. However, the TVA was a multipurpose project, eminently successful, and in ensuing years the yardstick function was largely overshadowed by its other activities. And of course, as a result of the Insull scandals, other legislation and regulatory agencies were strengthened or newly adopted to safeguard the public against abuse by electric utilities.

There are no such safeguards against abuse by the oil barons, a situation that most of our legislators have chosen to ignore, but not all. Most notably, Senator Adlai Stevenson III (D, Ill.) has addressed himself imaginatively to the problem and has suggested organization of a public corporation to exploit publicly owned oil and gas resources on public lands in free and open competition with the private companies. The chances for passage of his bill, or of overriding an expected veto if it is passed, are probably slight under present circumstances, with nearly everyone clamoring for the petroleum barons to save us. But to expose the proposal at the present juncture is an invaluable service. From an economic standpoint, the time for the idea has already arrived. From a political standpoint, its time will come in the not so distant future, for the yardstick principle may be the *only* effective tool available, barring total nationalization, to insure that the petroleum and other big business industries operate more in the public service. Meanwhile, it is essential in the present crisis that Congress muster the courage to see to it that public lands, containing an immeasurable treasure of oil, oil shale and coal resources, not be leased or sold in excessive amounts at giveaway prices to the captains of industry who are lusting after them.

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Stanley Kauffmann on theater

Robert Wilson

(Brooklyn Academy of Music)

New Phoenix Repertory

(Ethel Barrymore)

For the last three years I've been hearing and reading about Robert Wilson and his extraordinary theater productions, seen fitfully in New York, Paris, Iran and elsewhere. *Deafman Glance*, done in Brooklyn two years ago, ran three hours. Another production, with a complicated title, was done on a mountain in Iran and ran 168 *(sic)* hours. Wilson's latest production, in Brooklyn, is called *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin* and was announced to run from 7 pm to 7 am. I don't usually review productions I haven't seen completely —I'm told that *Stalin* actually ran until 9 am and that 100 people sat through it all—but I would like to comment on the two and a-half hours that I saw.

When one enters the old opera house, one sees Queen Victoria standing motionless at stage left. The forestage, right and left, is covered with sand on which various objects are strewn and through which some people's heads poke motionless. High over the audience a wire is strung with some large metal hoops on it. Victoria is immobile while the audience seats itself and waits; then, as the lights dim, she begins a series of Gertrude-Steinian utterances. The curtain rises on a stage covered with sand and backed by a blue sky-drop. A large photo of (I think) the young Stalin hangs from the flies but is soon hoisted up. A woman is reading something incomprehensible offstage, and continues throughout. Victoria disappears, two other regally dressed characters appear, then take seats in an audience box. A red-clad runner jogs back and forth across the stage from time to time. Two young women and a man, all stripped to the waist, do series of dance attitudes. (The pace of these actions, and of almost everything, is very, very slow.) A black youth (male? female?) in Victorian woman's dress is seated, holding a stuffed raven. A chair dangles by a rope from the flies. A man comes down the theater aisle with a long pole and moves two of the high-strung metal hoops slightly. A man and a boy come on stage and talk about television. A stout black man in a white suit bounds in and does a lot of pirouettes across the stage. Toward the end of the act, 20 or 25 people dressed like stereotype black mammies come out and do slow gyrations to the Blue Danube Waltz.

This act, called The Beach, runs an hour and 15 minutes; my itemization above is drastically incomplete. After a 15-minute intermission, Act Two began, with a prelude called Victorian Facade, then shifted to Victorian Drawing Room. I left some 40 minutes later. There would be five more acts and five more intermissions of 15 minutes each.

Two points are immediately clear: narrative is not the object; and the title, despite the photo, is irrelevant to anything I saw. (I'm told that, some hours after dawn, there were specific references to Stalin.) More important, the first glance—but only the first—makes us think there are connections here with the surrealist theater of the 1920s. In fact, after Wilson's last Paris show, a commentator wrote: "One convert to [Wilson's] style was Louis Aragon, who saw in Wilson the logical heir to the Surrealists." Heir, perhaps, but with a distinct difference. The surrealist theater for me—archetypally, Artaud's *Jet of Blood*—is usually one of speedy bombardment, a rapid series of disjunctive phenomena making their effect as much through their speed of sequence as through their contents and disjuncture. Wilson's tempo is *largo*. His intent is not the surrealist fracture of our "defenses" with speedy sequences of illogic. He wants us to savor pictures. He wants to create picture after picture with theatrical means, but not *tableaux vivants*—he wants them to flow or melt into one another, to move. He wants to connect them more by visual themes than by verbalizable ones, to provide combinations of people and lights and things and sounds that are striking. Perhaps they will stimulate the viewer to invent his own play; perhaps not. No matter.

Wilson creates these pictures, ingeniously, delicately, wittily. Now 29, he's been trained as a painter, has worked with deaf children, and knows how to speak to the eye. He has great skill in using theater means to present a (let's call it) flowing gallery of pictures. This does not keep the performance from frequently being boring: I have more expectations and interests in the theater than to see a series of pictures, however good. But, paradoxically, a certain quotient of boredom seems part of the plan. Wilson, though serious, is not solemn. Members of the audience are encouraged to change seats, to leave and return, to treat the presentations on stage as a sort of visual buffet from which they can help themselves as they choose.

My own reaction in sum: Why shouldn't there be a Robert Wilson? (Several foundations agree with me; and many prominent theater and dance people are impressed with his work.) Why shouldn't the theater's means be used by a painterly sensibility to thrust pictures into the element of temporality —of duration and motion? In film many painterly talents have tried it, though rarely at this length or with Wilson's invention and humor. His theater work is more difficult and in some ways more rewarding than the film attempts because he's doing it before us, with real people (some 150 of them, all told) and animals and lights and scenery and sounds. Boring as it is residually, his work is nevertheless authentic and authentically daring. I would hate to see Wilsonism take over theater and dance completely (small risk), but I'm glad he exists. I think I see why he is stimulating other and (to me) more congenial theater artists, and I would gladly go again for two or three more hours of boredom.

Anyway, Wilson's avant-garde intelli-

(continued on page 33)

Films Worth Seeing

American Graffiti. Cinematic insight transforms banal material—small-town adolescents in the '60s—into a pleasant memorial.

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SK

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WINTER BOOK NUMBER

Patrick *Who?* From *Where?*

The Eye of the Storm
by Patrick White
(Viking; $8.95)

Before October 1973, the 1973 Nobel grantee for literature was probably the most unread and unsung major living novelist. For years *The Aunt's Story* (1946) has been the only Patrick White title available in paperback in the United States. A current series of critical books on modern writers includes no study of White. In the last week in October you couldn't buy a copy of his new novel, *The Eye of the Storm*, in Cambridge, England; not because he sells well, but because Cambridge bookstore managers didn't order many copies.

Stiff competition for the prize came from Jorge Luis Borges, 12 years White's senior, nearly blind, and presumably closer to the end of his writing career. Robert J. Clements appealed politically to the Swedish Academy in the "Guest Word" column of *The New York Times Book Review* for September 9: "It might be the very mechanism to save Borges from Perón." Resisting such pressure, the Academy, announcing the award in Stockholm, praised White "for an epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature." The citation makes this author of eight novels, four plays and a book of short stories the first Australian and the first English-language writer in 11 years to win the award.

Born in England in 1912, Patrick Victor Martindale White migrated to Australia with his parents at the age of six months. He returned to England at 13 to attend public school, studied modern languages at Cambridge and served in RAF Intelligence. In 1948 he went back to Australia and has been living most of the intervening years in and around Sydney. His first novel, *The Happy Valley* (1939), a misfire in the Joycean mode, has long since been withdrawn from print. Two powerful stories of the Australian spirit, *The Tree of Man* (1954) and *Voss* (1957), had favorable reviews before dropping from sight.

The Eye of the Storm continues the legend. Buttressed by both the Nobel award and White's other work, it makes Australia a region of the mind, giving it the concreteness great art has always conferred on its subjects. White's Australia now enjoys the same immortality as Joyce's Dublin or Lawrence's Midlands. And since language penetrates human life, determining what and how people think, the speech of White's characters conveys to readers everywhere both the substance and meaning of Australian culture.

These characters form the mainspring of White's art. "To me characters are most important. The plot I do not worry about," he recently told *The Listener*, BBC's weekly magazine. *The Eye of the Storm* bears this out. Lacking dramatic drive, it is chiefly a novel of character and place. Time slides backward instead of forward. Though this technique chokes story movement, it delves to the core of obsession and sleepless nights. White's characters have private histories and personalities, not just peculiarities; something is always going on inside them.

The leading figure in this long, motionless novel of Australian family life, dazzling in her decline, is 86-year-old Elizabeth Hunter. Having had what looks like a fatal stroke, the blind, wraithlike Betty has called her two children from Europe to her Sydney bedside. Just as White delays telling us Betty's age until 60 pages from the end, so does he resist developing her meeting with her children as a Victorian deathbed reunion. There are no tears, no funeral oration, no strengthening of the family. Basil and Dorothy spend little time either with their mother or together. They want their mother's death nearly as much as her cash; in fact, the only issue they agree on is that she be removed from her expensive surroundings and put into a home or convent.

It is easy to understand this heartlessness. Full of venom and vanity, the brilliant, once-beautiful Betty has dominated everybody in her circle. Though blind, she is the eye of the storm of children and retainers clamoring around her. The novel's first sentence, "The old woman's head was barely fretting against the pillow," captures her reality as unmoving mover: head of a torn, ruined family, she is so wasted that her head barely dents the pillow supporting it. Enchantress, seductress and plain bully, she frets or vexes other heads, not her own. One character says of her: "Mrs. Hunter will see through a wall if she is determined to," and to her, "I've never known you not to rise to an occasion." Her power defies summary. White's practice of making us privy to her secret thoughts nearly puts her beyond blame and guilt. Yet it also deepens that blame and guilt as effective psychological realism can.

Of her children, both successes in the worldly sense, the more conspicuous is her son. A Shakespearean actor living in England, Sir Basil Hunter has served his apprenticeship on the drab Midland circuit and crashed the West End, where he is now a mainstay. The epigraph of *The Vivisector* applies just as strictly to him as to the artist-hero of White's 1970 novel: "He becomes beyond all others the great invalid, the great criminal, the great accused one—and the supreme knower. For he reaches the unknown." In reaching the unknown, Basil has renounced self-knowledge, perhaps even selfhood. Awareness of his acting limitations, advancing middle age and two failed marriages have given him the craving to be loved for himself. But he never projects a self to be loved. Having given up sincerity for stagecraft, he is forever playing a scene with other players to a darkened auditorium. This use of theater as interface bars him from selfhood—the Drama of the Unplayed I. Thus belief in his mother's wickedness and a wish for her speedy death, by removing the protective interface, have become principles of survival for him.

His sister Dorothy, though no actress, is also groping for a role. Having become a Roman Catholic in order to marry an aging French prince, from

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whom she has long since separated, she falls somewhere between plain girl and tragic princess. "Poor Dorothy," as she is usually called, fits nowhere. Though officially married, she has had no husband for years. Well into her 50s, she feels awkward as a daughter. Long self-exiled, she feels out of place both in Australia and with the English language. Like her actor-brother, whom she has never seen on the stage, she has left home to succeed in Europe beyond her boldest hopes. Yet, also like him, she knows that their mother, who stayed in raw, dowdy Australia, is the most spectacular Hunter.

Just as ironically, the Australia White shows us is not the spacious, open-air prairie. He draws the vastness of Australia tightly around him, setting his action mainly in a sickroom, where life is as subtle, in-turning and feline as in the Parisian salons of Proust. One woman says to another, while pinning an expensive jewel on her dress, "See? I haven't altered you . . . Only heightened a mystery which was there already, and which is too valuable not to respect." This drama of minute discriminations, with its finely executed compliments and side-swipes, calls for a delicacy of phrasing which also invokes Proust. *The Eye of the Storm* hums with subtext—the difference between what people say and what they mean. The issue that brings two characters together often fades behind the intensity generated by the encounter. Though the characters speak, they also criticize both their words and unspoken thoughts. Bitten back from the threshold of speech, their obsessions lodge in the heart, where they fester and vex.

White's style suits both these unreleased tensions and the low degree of completion in the characters' undertakings. Most plans either miscue or get sidetracked. Though they make discoveries, the characters rarely act on them. Dorothy's plane flies into a typhoon on its way to Australia; as in Conrad, the storm has a strong unifying effect on the plane's passengers and crew. Yet the psychic turmoil bred by Betty Hunter's death brings no such unity. Rather, it causes another death, a mean theft and a spat between brother and sister. The house and furniture go up for auction; Dorothy and Basil fly back to Europe on separate planes.

If White, by ignoring plot, refuses to shape experience to the pattern of literature, his marvelous prose is sometimes too literary. Everything hangs transfixed in the amber of his highly wrought style. A man doesn't take another slice of mutton because he likes the taste or because he's hungry. Instead, this happens: "Cocking his head, lowering his eyelids, his lashes so thick they looked as though they were gummed together, or fringed with flies, he agreed delicately to accept another help of mutton." Neither the mutton nor the man, a minor character, deserves this stylistic flourish. Style that serves itself becomes decadence.

But there is nothing decadent in White's love for ordinary experience. *The Eye of the Storm* is no mandarin novel. Its working class characters impart a crude vigor and decency that count more than subtleties. The gales of laughter crashing over the book's surface show White's humanity. Brilliant and robust, *The Eye of the Storm* could have clinched the Swedish Academy's decision to give White the 1973 award. In any case the novel strengthens his claim on the award.

Peter Wolfe

DIRTY TRICKS

or, Nick Noxin's Natural Nobility

JOHN SEELYE

An inspiring moral tale for this point in time of a young California lad's onward and upward struggles from humble beginnings and against all odds; of his encounters with those who threaten to compromise his natural nobility; of his cheerful pluck and determination, his ability to cope with slanders, and his abiding faith that "we make use of adversity, for if two wrongs do not make a right, it is an ill wind that blows no good."

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—*Publishers Weekly*

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An American Classic

The New York City Ballet
by Lincoln Kirstein
Photographs by Martha Swope & George Platt Lynes
(Knopf; $25)

The appearance of this book coincides with the 25th anniversary of the New York City Ballet. There are over 450 pictures superbly reproduced in black and white and in color; there is a text, a kind of diary, including some of the best ballet criticism ever written, by Lincoln Kirstein, the company's entrepreneur since 1935, when he brought George Balanchine to America.

America and Balanchine, America and classical dance—these were not at the time an apparently inevitable or even natural conjunction, except to Lincoln Kirstein. Just out of Harvard, where he'd helped create the magazine *Hound and Horn* as well as the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art, Kirstein entered the Paris cultural scene as a rich, charming, immensely talented young man who had all the world before him. Everything conspired to make him a brilliant dilettante, were it not for a peculiar and ineluctable ambition: he would found an American ballet.

Tchelitchev, who is brought to life as a person and as a painter in one of the many charming "brief lives" in this book, promptly told him that the idea was idiotic. Even Russian ballet, he explained, had not been Russian for 20 years—Diaghilev's company, in which Balanchine was a dancer and choreographer, was then in Paris—and there had been no French ballet for 50. What could nationality, much less nationalism, possibly have to do with ballet? Kirstein registered the objection and calmly went ahead, eschewing the compromise of importing a European company. It was to be an *American* ballet with American dancers. American—and yet it was to be devoted to classical ballet, one of the rich bequests of European court culture.

Forty years and many permutations later—first the American Ballet, then Ballet Caravan, then the American Ballet Caravan, then Ballet Society and finally, in 1948, the present company—Tchelitchev has been proved wrong. But there were many times in those 40 years when it seemed as if he were to be proved right. The difficulties would have been insupportable to anyone without some missionary zeal, and if the difficulties were to be overcome it was only to discover the lure of comfortable and wholly compromising arrangements (as in a brief flirtation with the Metropolitan Opera) that would have been irresistible to most other men.

What always saved the company, what brought it to its present grandeur, was a rather simple and unquestioning belief in certain artistic principles. These were derived in turn from assumptions about the nature of things. For Balanchine as for Kirstein, these were matters so beyond argument that they were also beyond dogmatizing, and their assurance expresses itself instead as a kind of aristocratic ease in the face of impoverishment or opposition.

Many of the qualities that went into the creation of the company are apparent, necessarily, in the writing of this book. In detailing the near collapses, the conflicts of personality and of vested interests, especially in the effort to find a permanent home, Kirstein is a concise yet patient storyteller, disarmingly candid, never sensational, and with a clear placidity of style in his portraits of people who at the time must have been fairly monstrous. Precisely because what he and Balanchine wanted to do was consistent with a large, quasi-religious faith, Kirstein has had not only a true believer's calm in the face of local setbacks, but also an instinctive willingness to subordinate temperament and personality to a governing idea. Balanchine, given his reputation now as the greatest choreographer the world has ever known, is himself relatively inconspicuous. His strange blend of fastidious casualness is a further expression of the fact that in a sense he as much as Kirstein has been a patron to something much larger than his own career.

The informing spirit of the company and of Kirstein in this book is neoclassical, especially with respect to the self as a creator or performer or patron or chronicler. This factor—which helps explain, as we'll see a bit later, why the dream of an American identity for the ballet could at last come true—is apparent at the very outset when Kirstein, then only 20, first became interested in Balanchine after watching him in the minor role of the magician in Diaghilev's production of *Firebird*. Balanchine was relatively obscure, but then, as Kirstein tells us, "I was not much interested in star personalities. They seemed to have only a single limited self to sell."

All selves are limited, and thus it is that in telling the story of the company, none of the extraordinary people who came into its ambience is given disproportionate attention. From Muriel Draper, beautifully sketched at the beginning, to Dag Hammarskjold later on, to Ronald Bates the stage manager, near the end of the book, everyone, including the many great dancers, is affectionately but properly acknowledged. Even Balanchine as a personality is not allowed to dominate center stage. That is a place reserved for the thing to which everyone is looking, everyone is contributing, the emerging pattern which is the continuously evolving company, the opportunity for work. No one is, in this respect, more self-denying than Kirstein himself. The very layout of this handsome book attests to his distaste for posturings. His writings, arranged in three columns a page and interrupted several pages at a time by photographs, are not easily or even very agreeably available, and the weight and size of the book do not encourage anyone to treat it as something primarily to be read.

Nonetheless, the story he tells does not need the pictures, and it can be hoped that the text will sometime be printed without them. It consists of a series of dated entries in an imaginary diary which begins in April 1912 and ends in January 1973, with a look ahead to the bicentennial celebrations of 1975-76. Each dated entry is a brief communication about some key occasions, followed by a longer commentary. And because Kirstein is without any obsessive interest in personalities, these commentaries are open to a vast range of impressions and they exude that power of disciplined gregariousness that also characterizes Balanchine's ballets.

Any such capacity for inclusiveness

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depends, both in Balanchine and in Kirstein, on an equally strong capacity for eventual exclusion. Always, the test is utility, whether or not under the pressure of a continuing, especially a continuously working experiment, a dancer, a musical composition, a choreographic style, a libretto can further a process of perpetual disclosure. More gratifying still is the possibility that a new element might enlarge everyone's sense of the potential shape of the whole enterprise. America was not a threat, as it might have been to snobs, but an opportunity to see what might happen to the traditions of classical ballet in such a new, even alien environment.

Kirstein's and Balanchine's enthusiasm for the American possibility has been evident from the beginning. If the first of Balanchine's creations in his adopted country was *Serenade*, to the music of Tchaikovsky with its clear distillation of classical movement in classical dress, the second, to the music of Kay Swift, was called *Alma Mater*, and it was concerned with ritual rivalries on the American campus, featuring a demi-god quarterback in uniform and a Salvation Army girlfriend who becomes a stripteaser. Since Diaghilev had passed through a decade in which he was intensely interested in Slavic folklore, why not some interest in an American equivalent, and besides, Balanchine had, a decade earlier, created the ballet *Apollon*, in which another kind of god had also played games. *Alma Mater* was an early and now lost demonstration of Balanchine's freedom as it derived from his unequaled command of the idioms of classical dance and classical music, and it was also an evidence of Kirstein's freedom to go native, to be that splendid kind of American who knows European culture so intimately that he is not afraid of his own. When, during an interruption in his direct association with Balanchine, Kirstein in the mid- to late '30s went back and forth across the continent with *Dance Caravan*, he sponsored ballets on American themes, like *Filling Station*, with music by Virgil Thompson, and he did so out of a conviction that magic does not come from subjects that are arcane or antique merely, but from "a rehabilitation of the commonplace." Though Kirstein quotes the phrase from Cocteau he might have found many equivalents in Emerson.

The founding of classical ballet in America meant, from the point of view of Kirstein and Balanchine, that they must also find America in ballet. They are different from Ted Shawn and Martha Graham in that from its inception the New York City Ballet was meant to discover something American *within* the traditions of classical ballet. When Balanchine claims that he felt like an American before he left Leningrad, he is suggesting that in his imagination America offered the hope of discovering things about classical dance that were already implicit in its traditions but that could only become visible in a cultural climate that would test the traditions in a new way. It would test them, for example, by the abrasive proximities of popular dance, musical film and commercial enterprise. When in 1969 Balanchine and Kirstein leafed through George and Ira Gershwin to select the songs for the ballet *Who Cares?* their intention was not to produce a ballet that would fill the State Theater. Nor was it a pastoral indulgence in American popular music, which had in any case occupied Balanchine's interest when he choreographed such musicals as *Babes in Arms* and *On Your Toes*. Nor was it an exercise in nostalgia for what the Astaires and others had already done with the same music. Rather, *Who Cares?*, though it realized all these possibilities, is one of the masterpieces of Balanchine because it constituted a discovery in the tempo of Gershwin of implicit configurations that could be made visible to us *only* in the movements of classical dance. Balanchine's choreography thus exalts rather than patronizes the delight we can take in songs that had become a "commonplace" of American experience. And there is a reverse process, with the same pleasing results for cultural patriots like myself, in the fact that when one sees Stravinsky's *Symphony in C*—and Balanchine does let us *see* music—or Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra* in the "Rubies" section of *Jewels*, the music is framed in time and space by dance movements that reveal to us the embryonic possibilities of classical movement even in such indigenous dances as Busby Berkeley and jitterbugging.

The ballet created by the contributory effort led by Balanchine and Kirstein is American to the degree that it also expresses a neoclassical faith that we are embarked on a corporate enterprise of discovery into shapes already potential. We are looking in those 20th-century materials that are providentially American, and through Balanchine we are finding there marvelous variants of forms and shapes that correspond to those traditional ones with which classical ballet has always concerned itself. They await our probing and emerge when called with beauty and freshness. The only unforgivable betrayal of this enterprise is therefore a preservation and perpetuation of the past by mere repetition. One feels the Americanness of the New York City Ballet in some lovely emanation from the stage of discoveries being made, of culture as doing and making and performing, of culture inseparable from working. The chorus of the New York City Ballet is never as mechanically precise as the chorus of, say, the Bolshoi, simply because the dancers are continually required to give time not to rehearsal of old but to the learning of new works, and the lead dancers cannot become temperamental stars in a particular role because they are forever asked to become children again, students of a new role. It is as if, by contrast, the visiting European companies had lost the sense of what neoclassicism had meant in Europe itself. In celebrating this magnificient book we might all congratulate ourselves that America has let itself become the home of one of the achievements in the history of culture.

Richard Poirier

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOSEPHINE O'BRIEN SCHAEFER *is the author of* The Three-Fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf. PETER WOLFE *teaches English at the University of Missouri, St. Louis.* RICHARD POIRIER's *most recent books are* Norman Mailer *(Viking) and* The Performing Self *(Oxford).* LOUIS COXE *is a poet who teaches English at Bowdoin College, Maine.* NAT HENTOFF *is staff writer for* The New Yorker *and* Village Voice. ROSEMARY RUETHER, *lecturer, Yale Divinity School, is author of* Liberation Theology *(Paulist Press).* JAMES TYMS *is professor of religion at Howard University.* PAUL MARX *is professor of English at the University of New Haven, Connecticut.* JAMES WALT *teaches English at the University of Maryland.* PATRICIA GOEDICKE's *book of poems is* Between Oceans *(Harcourt Brace).* MARY REED NEWLAND *is in the office of Religious Education, Diocese of Albany, NY.* PHILIP BOOTH, *whose most recent book is* Margins *(Viking), teaches at Syracuse University.* SONIA GERNES *has published poetry in* Sewanee Review, Southern Review *and other magazines.*

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Reconsideration

Yesterday's Feminism

Although Virginia Woolf's many provocative and perceptive comments about the female condition do not constitute a systematic examination of women, she did devote two books entirely to the subject: *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938), the first one playful and impressionistic, the later one bitter and academic.

Three Guineas
by Virginia Woolf
First published by
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What is most striking about these two books today is their correspondence to the shift in tone and scope of the women's movement itself: from the suffragist to women's liberation.

A Room of One's Own is experiencing a real revival, but Virginia Woolf's position there is less timely than her position in *Three Guineas*. In it Mrs. Woolf did for women what Frantz Fanon was later to do for blacks in examining the acceptance and absorption of self-destroying attitudes. She saw how a gifted girl, to save her self-esteem, might be prompted to exclude herself from her own sex, might make the amazing claim, for instance, that she does not like women! Surprisingly few girls are willing to reject their sexual identity. But they retain it at the cost of much bewilderment and pain. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Years*, to mention only three of her novels, women themselves actively teach young girls to admire courage, intellectual and artistic achievement, freedom in general yet at the same time imply that women should not aspire to such things for themselves. Particularly in *To the Lighthouse*, ridicule emerges as the strongest weapon to discourage girls from attempting to compose, paint, invent, explore, enter freely into those areas of human exertion that everything in their education teaches them to see as most estimable.

Three Guineas has struck many readers —female and male alike—as reverse sexism; for Virginia Woolf praises and loudly exhorts women to retain the attitudes bred in them by what she calls their unpaid-for education, their oppression. All women, she says, no matter what their social rank, have been taught by four teachers: poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties. The lessons learned have been mostly negative; but they have created an "ancient consciousness" charged with "suffering and sensibility" that constitutes a potential contribution to human life. Her suggestions on how that contribution can be made as women attempt to take their place in the world established by men seem very appropriate today.

She urges women, for example, not to exchange poverty for power, not to take on the male lust for possession. Of course she does not underestimate the importance of economic independence, knowing too well that the financially dependent woman is psychologically dependent as well. Men, who have always known this, always struggle to be independent of their fathers. To the same end she argues that mothers should be paid wages by the state, refuting in advance the claim that motherhood will be demeaned by wages by noting that clergymen are paid for performing their "sacred" duty. But women must not become wage slaves; she tells them to get the money they need for the full development of body and mind and then to stop. A woman can tell when she has arrived at that stopping point, according to Virginia Woolf, if she attends to the "psychometer" within her. One might presume that men also have such psychometers; the Gauguin complex that creates in many middle-aged men the desire to throw over job and family and head for a tropical island suggests that their psychometers are telling them they have paid too much for the money they earned. Although Virginia Woolf restricts her comments in this instance to women, this limitation does not negate the value of the analysis. Like black and white in America, male and female are so inextricably linked that it is tremendously difficult to separate them for discussion. But until we do, we are almost inevitably drawn into the false position of defining a black person as one who is not white and a woman as one who is not a man. Freud has been severely criticized of late for this particular kind of male chauvinism. But in one area this negative procedure is reversed: men do not have babies; women do.

We are witnessing in our most recent experience an attempt to convince women that childbearing is not their one positive goal. This development would no doubt have deeply interested Virginia Woolf. After centuries of being taught to value child-bearing over all other activities, women are now being asked to find other satisfactions for their creative energies. In other words, woman's "natural destiny" can be changed for ecological reasons. Since it is ridiculous to claim it takes a lifetime to rear one or two children, men are now saying they will let women do other things if only they will turn away from their ancient occupation of childbearing.

This capitulation coincides with a diminishing regard for the second of the teachers in *Three Guineas:* chastity. Chastity has taught women not to offer themselves for sale, a lesson Virginia Woolf finds especially important for women who enter the professions. She tells them not to sell their brains, not to be seduced into becoming like men in order to gain acceptance into formerly all-male provinces. Indeed it is in this connection that she draws attention to the intimate relation between the petty domestic tyranny of men over women and the terrifying public tyranny that the world was then calling fascism.

Three Guineas had been written in response supposedly to a letter that asked Virginia Woolf to contribute to an organization opposed to war. After some very lengthy remarks concerning war and the relation of women to society, she decided to give one guinea to support women's education, one guinea to support women's entry into the professions and one guinea to support opposition to war. The last guinea does not imply that she is joining any such organization. Organizing is a male response; women tend to trust more private means; they are outsiders. And just as she tells women who enter professions not to imitate men, she herself will not make the inveterately male response to a problem: organize. To prevent war, she says, we have to change people. The most necessary change involves the attitude of men and women to women. As long as men treat women as unpaid inferiors, as long as women treat men as their natural su-

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periors, the conditions that engender war will continue.

Women who forget the lessons taught by chastity and become dominators when they enter the professions are merely continuing the male pattern of tyranny. In *The Female Eunuch* Germaine Greer makes the same point: "Most women who have arrived at positions of power in a man's world have done so by adopting masculine methods which are not incompatible with the masquerade of femininity. They still exploit the sado-masochistic hook-up of the sexes in which 'we have only the choice of being hammer or anvil.'" The hammer or anvil mentality is cited as the precondition of war in *Three Guineas.*

Years earlier in *A Room of One's Own*, before she was attempting to draw this connection between the family and the state, Virginia Woolf used a different metaphor. In their subservient role, she noted, women have served as looking-glasses for men, looking-glasses that reflect a larger than life image. Men have needed this image to give them confidence in facing life's difficulties. Recognizing how much courage and strength that perpetual struggle requires, in 1929 she did not try to enlist women's support in destroying that image. She could lightly pass over the building up of male confidence at the expense of women, so long as the women were not taken in by men's illusions of grandeur. She tells young women to ignore what men think and get themselves £500 a year and a room of their own in which to develop their human capacity. But in 1938 when the cost of the myth of male supremacy could be seen to involve war, she addresses herself to both men and women and demands the end to such glorification of the male. She is now convinced that the false image must be openly contested.

Virginia Woolf's third and fourth teachers of women might prove useful here. Because women have been continually exposed to derision they have learned to make themselves anonymous, to seek in obscurity protection from this derision. Woman is a creature about whom we know very little, says Virginia Woolf. As a writer she decries the literary impoverishment that results from the almost total silence concerning women except for their encounters with men which, she reminds us, make up a very small part of their lives. If, for example, we knew Hamlet only in relation to Gertrude and Ophelia, how impoverished our sense of him would be. And yet that is exactly how we know most women in literature. But Virginia Woolf also saw how this veil of obscurity surrounding women's lives has allowed them to remain civilized human beings. They have not felt compelled as men have to make their mark by becoming visible, dressing themselves in judges' robes, policemen's and soldiers' uniforms, academic gowns or priestly habits. Because men were not subjected to laughter—as women are—but on the contrary accorded reverential treatment on the basis of their outer regalia, they have assumed a pompous, a self-important, an inhuman view of themselves. Consequently such men consider themselves the natural superiors not only of all women but of most men. All her life a woman is reminded that her greatest accomplishment is subsumed within the common condition of womanhood: being a good wife and mother. Perhaps such an education in anonymity makes women less competitive. Although sapping women's belief in their own individual capacity, derision has strengthened their awareness of themselves as part of a general humanity. Derision, therefore, has been a civilizing agent and might be of use in preventing war.

In the same way, since women have been disqualified from the highest positions in church, state, university and business, they are free from unreal loyalties. Virginia Woolf notes that no woman should feel national allegiance since her country has consistently discriminated against her. Some black Americans have made a similar claim. But since the spirit of nationalism is a threat to peace, war would be less likely if men too could be made free from unreal loyalties.

Three Guineas is not, however, a brief for the oppression of men as a means of developing a finer type of human being. Mrs. Woolf is not comparing oppressed women to unoppressed men; but oppressed women to oppressing men. Reviewing the results of domestic and social tyranny on the human beings involved, she sees the male tyrant as much more psychologically damaged than the subservient female. For this reason she always deplored the use of the term feminist to describe her own position, noting that the label feminist obscures the fact that the struggle is for human freedom, male as well as female. She declares she has a bias for the union of male and female. It is, she says, "natural for the sexes to cooperate. One has a profound, if irrational, instinct in favor of the theory that the union of man and woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness."

Although this union is a bringing together, a completing, that she would not sum up completely in the sexual relation, I have thought more and more as I have reread Virginia Woolf that the physiological experience of self in sexual intercourse is the unstated basis for her statements about the essential differences between men and women. One of her most quoted views concerns the androgynous nature of the artistic mind. Speculating on what Coleridge might have meant in claiming that a great mind is androgynous, she says that such a mind "is resonant and porous . . . it transmits emotion without impediment . . . it is naturally incandescent and undivided." And yet elsewhere she describes the essentially masculine force of the English sentence and speaks of the need for women to create a new sentence that will more closely approximate the pace and weight of their thought. Such a sentence will be more elastic she says, capable of stretching further, of enveloping more. At another point she states that Kipling and Galsworthy use only the male side of their brains, explaining that what is lacking is a suggestive tone that is full of contradictions, simultaneously holding the positive and negative in solution.

In her novels Virginia Woolf describes men as urged on by a need to decide between contradictions and to arrive at certainties that support action. Her women, affectionally committed to resolving contradictions into maybes that support hope, are emotionally certain that life can be sustained only if there are maybes that hold both yes and no and move the human spirit from the immediate present into the immediate future. She suggests that something in women makes them view hope (the human will to live) and certainty (the physical fact of death) as the two irreconcilables in existence. She further suggests—through her characterizations of women—that most women then throw their weight on the side of hope, sustaining it in the face of all odds but never so recklessly that a failure of spirit in one instance will undermine the belief in possibility in the next instance. Therefore, as in *To the Lighthouse,* the woman *cannot* say the weather will be fair and she *will* not say it will rain; she says maybe. Something in the man leads him to feel the maybes are intolerable; for purposes of action, he

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must ignore the relative fluidity of life. In Virginia Woolf's novels women are always grateful to men who call a halt to supposition and state the facts. It is very tiring, always to allow for possibilities. On the other hand the men in her novels turn to women as a source of new beginnings, an eternal quickening of fresh possibilities.

The old formula of female passiveness and male aggressiveness is a farcical simplification of sexual experience in which the woman accepts, takes in the male, and the male enters the female. Virginia Woolf's suggestion that the female sentence needs to be capable of holding negative and positive simultaneously does far greater justice to the complicated psychological ramifications of physiological experiences.

These internal sexual experiences, however, have not generally been discussed, particularly in Virginia Woolf's lifetime. Until quite recently women have not written books about their own physiological or psychological life. Indeed even though family life had trained them to give self-effacing attention to the smallest indication of what men felt and thought, women did not write books about their own sensual experiences with men. It has been in women's own self-interest necessary to watch, analyze, understand men, to become psychologically knowledgeable. This careful scrutiny, this hard-headed and hard-won knowledge is what men have traditionally called woman's intuition! But women have spent far less energy trying to understand themselves. What is more, according to Mrs. Woolf, they have had to live in a small, very conventional world which has given them almost no opportunity to explore their own nature. In *Three Guineas* she uses Antigone as her emblem of the female quest. Antigone is caught between the civil law which says her brother Polynices is a traitor and the primal law which consecrates the ties of blood and says a sister's duty is to perform some rites of burial. Antigone declares the laws of humanity are higher than civic laws, but she questions just what those primal laws might be. Virginia Woolf sees her as going beyond the problem the Greek dramatist raises for her; Antigone is really trying to find the laws of her own being.

But if she never strays outside the social conventions, how is she to find those laws? Virginia Woolf notes that when a woman departs from her role as daughter, wife, mother, she steps across a sword into a new world. Men cross over

From Calcutta...

Report on Elizabeth Dass...

REC'D CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND, INC. Richmond, Va.

CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND, INC.
CALCUTTA, INDIA - CASEWORKER REPORT

TO NAZARETH HOME, CALCUTTA.

NAME: ELIZABETH DASS DATE OF BIRTH: APRIL 12, 1964
NATIVE PLACE: CALCUTTA ORDER OF BIRTH: THIRD DAUGHTER
HEALTH: FRAIL, THIN, WALKS WITH DIFFICULTY, PROTEIN DEPRIVED
CHARACTERISTICS: GENTLE, QUIET, COOPERATIVE. SPEAKS CLEARLY AND IS OF GOOD MIND. WILL BE ABLE TO LEARN ONCE HEALTH AND STRENGTH ARE RESTORED.

PARENT CONDITION: FATHER: DECEASED.
MOTHER: MALNOURISHED, RECENT VICTIM OF SMALLPOX, WORKS IN A MATCH FACTORY.

INVESTIGATION REPORT:
ELIZABETH'S FATHER USED TO BE A STREET CLEARNER, DIED FROM TYPHUS. HER MOTHER IS VERY WEAK FROM HER RECENT ILLNESS-INDEEDIT IS REMARKABLE SHE IS ALIVE AT ALL. ONLY WORK AVAILABLE TO THIS WOMAN IS IN A MATCH FACTORY WHERE SHE EARNS TWO RUPEES A DAY (26¢) WHEN SHE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO GET THERE AND WORK.

HOME CONDITIONS: HOUSE: ONE ROOM BUSTEE (HOVEL) OCCUPIED BY SEVERAL OTHER PERSONS BESIDES ELIZABETH AND HER MOTHER. HOUSE IS SO SMALL COOKING IS DONE ON THE FOOTPATH. BATHING IS DONE AT A PUBLIC TAP DOWN THE ROAD. PERSONS LIVING WITH THEM IN THIS HOUSE ARE NOT OF GOOD REPUTE, AND THE MOTHER FEARS FOR ELIZABETH.

SISTERS: MARIA DASS, DECEASED OB SMALLPOX
LORRAINE DASS, ALSO DECEASED OF SMALLPOX
(ELIZABETH FORTUNATELY ENTIRELY ESCAPED CONTAGION)

REMARKS: ELIZABETH WILL CENTAINLY BECOME ILL, PERHAPS WILL TAKE UP THIEVING, MAYBE EVEN MORE TERRIBLE WAYS OF LIVING, IF SHE IS NOT REMOVED FROM PRESENT HOME CONDITIONS. HER MOTHER IS WILLING FOR HER TO GO TO NAZARETH HOME AND WEEPS WITH JOY AT THE HOPE OF HER LITTLE DAUGHTER BECOMING SAFE FROM THE WRETCHED LIFE THEY NOW HAVE.

STRONGEST RECOMMENDATION THAT ELIZABETH DASS BE ADMITTED AT ONCE.

Elizabeth Dass was admitted to the Nazareth Home, and when this picture was taken, she was already doing better. Her legs were stronger . . . she was running with the other children, learning to write her own name.

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into this world with impunity; and in the open territory of their freedom, test the conventions (both the external code and the internal response) and perhaps discover some fresh facts about themselves and "human" nature. Women almost never have such freedom. Virginia Woolf illustrates that fact when she describes the careers of Tolstoi and George Eliot. Once George Eliot chose to ignore the law that demanded a woman marry the man she lives with, she was cut off from the conventional life that might have additionally nurtured her literary gifts and kept open avenues of self-discovery that were blocked off when she became an "outlaw." Tolstoi, whose sexual appetite has become part of literary mythology, never experienced the closing of any drawing room doors. His was the wide world of human freedom.

Virginia Woolf recognized that until such freedom belongs to women, Antigone's question: what are the laws of my own being? will go unanswered. But she also recognized how loath women are to engage in a real struggle for that freedom. Most women are deeply and personally outraged by their own raised voices, rude remarks, ungracious gestures in any open conflict between the sexes. Like Virginia Woolf they have a predilection for the union of man and woman. Any women's movement that ignores or tries to explain away as brainwashing the inner revulsion that most women feel while engaged in open hostility toward men will not win the support of most women. When women grow assertive, angry, bitter, they feel simultaneously hurt by a sense that some of what is best in them is necessarily in abeyance. Of course when they have been complying, self-denying, withdrawing, some of what is best in them has also been in abeyance. The great desire is not to be assertive, not to be compliant, but to be whole. Neither servitude nor struggle permits that wholeness. Virginia Woolf did not solve the problem in that yesterday before World War II. But she did add one voice to inquiry, a voice—particularly in *Three Guineas*—that exhorts women not to lose the best of what they now are, in the struggle to become what they might be in a freer world.

Josephine O'Brien Schaefer

COMING

Saul Maloff reviews Nelson Algren's *The Last Carousel*

Prose from Poets

The Poet's Story
edited by Howard Moss

(Macmillan; $7.95)

A book of this sort should properly find its place under the rubric, curiosities of literature.Perhaps. Most readers will, I think, approach it warily, fearing they may be in for a bumpy trip, poets being poets and by no means writers of fiction (and we'll thank no one for bringing up Hardy, Meredith or James Dickey). The notion of making such a book as this seems to have been the editor's; Howard Moss has done a fine job of stating some of the problems we face in dealing with poets' fictions and in delineating the limits and eccentricities of the poetic, as opposed to the fictionist, sensibility and imagination. More than that, Moss strongly implies that the truly excellent work of short fiction by a poet is a rarity. He points up the essential virtue and vice of the poet's approach: call it solipsism when it fails; "the mysterious and real held in suspension" when it succeeds.

But what are these stories "really" like? Can we tell at once or later than that whether the poet or the alter-and-prose ego is in charge? My own guess is that if one admires the poet whose story one reads in this book, one will admire the story—not for itself but for what it confirms of our views of the poetry, or alternatively for its presentation of an element in our poet's nature we had not hitherto recognized. For example if you like Anne Sexton's posture as the mad lady, you will find her story "All God's Children Need Radios" a proper part of the canon; if not, not. And similarly, if you inhabit pop-Barthelme country, you will find stronger music and madder wine in James Schuyler's "Life, Death and Other Dreams": spread it out funnier on the pages and it is one of his poems—in drag, so to speak. In a different way, Jean Garrigue's "The Snowfall" comes close to parody of one aspect of her verse.

We read this collection of stories in large measure to find out more about the poets, and I for one found out something I had suspected about John Berryman but could not be sure of till I read his "The Lovers." I will not tell you what that is, but for me this story is the finest in the book, combining those elements Moss speaks of with one quality I find nowhere else in the book: intensity. The story, like one of Berryman's poems, "Dream Songs," evokes youth, middle-aging, passion and yearning without poeticisms, febrility or the kind of pretentious "sensitivity" we associate with poets' stories and novels. Perhaps because such work is usually of the will, of the poet's insistence that if he cannot write poetry for this "dry" period, he can take a flier at fiction and hope something turns up: preferably a poem.

Yet, none of these stories is either incompetent or "commercial"; nor is any of them a fake. If there is a general failing it may be a tendency toward either blind allegory or an open-ended, exquisite fingering of the unhealed wound of childhood, vices perhaps more common to the poetic than the fictional muse.

And with that in mind, consider the view of childhood in Mona Van Duyn's story, a work that is typical in that it echoes themes in the poems, a view of the young woman or grown girl, mad in a mad world, as in Sylvia Plath's "Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams." The source—or perhaps the only original—of this kind of story is to be found, I think, in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It may also derive its popularity with many writers from a paucity of poetic and fictional ideas. Nostalgia and self-pity, the eating of dreams, constitute a bad diet and the appetite grows as it feeds. The Van Duyn story deals with a small girl's indulgence in the standard "I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours" of a past and innocent age; the Plath has to do, by a rather coarse allegory as the title suggests, with religio-masochism and the embroidery of that plain theme. Van Duyn writes straightforwardly of the sources of felt guilt in somber parental warning whereas Plath wrenches the trauma of guilt, evil dream and the perversion of Christianity into a mad world of mad scientists.

Putting it bluntly, I find most of the stories—and I confess to a certain arbitrariness in my choices and emphases—"unprofessional" in the sense that no real fictionist would leave the stories where they are. In a case such as Merwin's "Return to the Mountains" we have the seed of a Merwin poem—indeed a volume of Merwin poems—in a rather finely written reminiscence, seemingly written as a kind of aide-

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memoir. One is glad to accept it as such because, as such, it is no mean feat. On the other hand stories like Muriel Rukeyser's may appeal to us chiefly because we can't for the life of us associate it with a Rukeyser poem: presumably that's the point or part of it, as it may be with the Millay. No association intended: only juxtaposition. But the impression I have from the book as a whole is of diverse sensibilities exercising themselves in an alien discipline for the sake of that discipline, its rigor, and as a way to, or back to, poetry. For the engrossing questions this book raises, for the interest a number of the stories provoke, and for the acute intelligence of the editing and the introduction, read *The Poet's Story*, with particular emphasis on "poet."

Louis Coxe

God Talk

Three Recent Books on Religion

Jesus Now by Malachi Martin

(Dutton; $7.95)

A rapid survey of the many images of Jesus in Western culture, both ancient and modern, the author characterizes the superficiality and even perversity of many of these images, such as Jesus Caesar (Emperor of Christendom) and Jesus Doctor (learned theologian). He reviews modern images: the Black Jesus, the Feminist Jesus and of course Jesuschristsuperstar. But failing to grapple with the substance of this material, his style remains glib, his portraits seldom rising above caricature. Martin unveils the "true Jesus," the cosmic self, the divine humanity in each of us. This is hardly new, corresponding essentially to the platonic Christology of Greek Christianity; a noble tradition, but one that does little to satisfy either the question of the historical Jesus or the social relevance of the image of Jesus for today.

Is God a White Racist? A Preamble to Black Theology by William R. Jones

(Doubleday; $2.95)

William R. Jones represents a new generation of black theologians. Professor at Yale Divinity School and a Unitarian-Universalist minister, Dr. Jones wishes to lay the foundation for a critical theodicy for black theology of liberation. Theodicy traditionally meant "justifying the ways of God to men," necessary because of the contradiction between the doctrine of God's omnipotence and sovereignty and the fact that the wicked flourish and the innocent suffer. Traditional theodicy had two answers to this contradiction, both of which are unacceptable to a black theology of liberation: 1) that the innocent sufferers are not really innocent but guilty of some apostasy toward God and God uses the oppressors to punish their sin, and 2) that the innocent will be vindicated and the evil punished after death or after the end of the world.

By the same token black theology cannot allow any obscurantism which declares that "God's ways are beyond human comprehension." God's ways either make sense in terms of human experience of justice and injustice or else they do not. By implication black theology demands a doctrine of redemption that is social and this-worldly. Its theodicy must be one that motivates the black struggle against oppression, not one that would justify quietism or passive resignation before oppression.

Recent black theologians have sought to meet these requirements. But Jones believes that they have not sufficiently taken into account the contradictions between traditional theism and the facts of black sufferings and the demands of black liberation. Jones examines the major black theologians: Joseph Washington, James Cone, Albert Cleage, Major Jones and J. Deotis Roberts, and finds each deficient in this respect. Any idea that God is specifically on the side of black people, that blacks are God's chosen people, that God is active and sovereign in history must reckon with the facts of the continued unmerited suffering of black people and the prosperity of the white oppressors. If God exercises active sovereignty and as well, God is on the side of black people, whence black suffering and why is it not overcome?

Jones believes that the logic of theism leads not to a doctrine of a black chosen people, but to the thesis of divine racism. God is unjustly biased toward whites. God allows blacks to suffer not because they have sinned, but because He is prejudiced against them. The image of God is modeled on the facts of white power. This is the only conclusion left, once one rejects the sops of "pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by." Even the thesis that blacks are suffering servants for white redemption makes God responsible for black suffering.

If a white racist God is to be avoided, Jones believes that black theology must abandon theism. It must recognize that the facts of history cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of an active sovereign God without implying a white racist God. Blacks must also give up the corollary idea of a black chosen people. Black theology must adopt an anthropocentric view of God: God is the divine ground of Being which does not act independently of man, but in and through man's struggle for good or capitulation to evil. Blacks cannot count on a God outside themselves to give added strength to their cause. They must give positive meaning to their suffering by vindicating divine justice on earth.

God Is Red by Vine Deloria

(Grosset and Dunlap; $7.95)

Vine Deloria, spokesman for the rise of "red consciousness," is the son of an Indian Episcopalian clergyman. Himself seminary-trained, Deloria's criticism of the white man's relation to Indian society has increasingly focused on the character of Christianity. Deloria believes that the white man s destruction-relationships with other people and with the earth have been inculcated and justified to a large extent by his religion. In this new book Deloria contrasts critical aspects of Christianity with the spirit of Indian religion.

The source of white imperialism lies in the Christocentric view of history. Christians see themselves as God's sole elect people who have been commissioned to conquer all other nations in Christ's name. Other nations appear on the Christian historical horizon only when Christians are about to conquer them. Preaching to all nations translates

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into seizing the lands of other peoples and annihilating their cultural identities. To deny the truth of other people's religion is to deny to them the right to exist autonomously.

By contrast, Indian religion affirms diversity and particularity. Peoplehood, land and religion form a single covenantal relationship that gives each community unique character. Each people, in their own context, is a "chosen people" with their own "promised land" where they are to find their destiny. Religion is a function of peoplehood. The Hebrew religion understood this unique relation of peoplehood, land and covenantal relation with God. But this understanding was distorted into abstract spiritualizing when Christianity severed its roots with Judaism. This is why the Jews have always, correctly, rejected the Christian claim to Israel's election and messianic hope.

Christianity also developed an antagonistic view of the relation of man and nature that translated into ecocide. Nature is regarded as an enemy to be subjugated and repressed. For the Indian nature is a subject, not an object. God is not made in the image of man. God is the great spirit of all things. Christianity boasts of the "brotherhood of man," meaning by this the subjugation of all other identities other than the Christian one. The Indian speaks rather of the "brotherhood of life," accepting each people and each living being's right to possess their own unique nature. Man must find his place within the ecosystem. He must stand within, not against or outside of, the great web of life.

The religion of sacred history must give way to the religion of sacred space. In sacred history one people alone dominates the central axis of history. In religions of sacred space each people has its own space, its own land and identity. Christianity makes creation a pseudohistorical event of the distant past and salvation a historical event of the distant future. For the red man, creation is now and revelation takes place in the present. God still speaks to the prophets, and each person is called to his own "vision quest."

The white man's religion promises immortality, but creates an obsession with and fear of death. The Indian is fearless toward death, because he lives, not as an atomic individual, but in the collective soul of the tribe. Ancestors do not depart for a distant heaven, but live here on earth in communion with the living members. Bones of the forefathers and mothers go down into the earth to provide the seeds from which the crop of living humanity springs up in each new season. Christianity sees death as unnatural; the red man sees death as the natural completion of his life, a transformation point in the continuous flow of life that goes down into and is reborn from the mother earth. When the white man roots up the bones of Indian dead to make them artifacts in his museums, he shows his inability to understand the Indian spirit. For in so doing he pulls up the roots of the ongoing life of the tribe.

Lacking a sense of social solidarity, the white man's religion abstracts the self out of its social context into an isolated confrontation with an "angry" God. The salvation he receives does not flow back into a renewed social life. A gap opens up between "moral man" and the immoral society which is the actual reality of Christian history. Individualism characterizes a religion that cannot close the gap between its high personal ideals and its disastrous social reality. Indian religion, however, is intrinsically socialistic. The tribe provides each member with an equal right to exist. Its social ethics coincide with its social laws and customs. This is illustrated in the contrast between the white and the red man's view of crime. The white man believes the criminal should be "punished"; Indian tradition exacts compensation, not punishment. This rehabilitates the criminal into society and restores the injured ones.

Deloria sees Christian power as a destructive episode on an earth that once belonged, and must in the future belong, to the Indian. He recognizes the difficulty of translating the customs of a pre-technological society into the relation these values must assume in a post-technological era. If Christianity is to learn these values, it must radically change its historical character. The white man may be the political owner of the land, but the red man is still its spiritual owner. America can survive only if the white man becomes an Indian, learns to revere the sacred spaces of this land and put his bones into the earth so they become his roots. The treaty of red and white man must be a covenant with nature as well. Only then can they sign a treaty which will not be broken; which shall stand "as long as the grass shall grow and the rivers flow."

Rosemary Radford Ruether

Popular Music

Listen to the Blues
by Bruce Cook

(Scribner's; $8.95)

In a previous book, *The Beat Generation*, Bruce Cook proved to be an extraordinarily attentive and penetrating interviewer of those diversely rebellious precursors of the "counterculture" of the 1960s. He also revealed an ability to be admiring without being ingenuous. In his much more ambitious new book, *Listen to the Blues*—an introduction to the deepest and most variegated vein of American music—Cook's personal and historical reporting is even more impressive.

Traveling, interviewing, listening, Cook ranged from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago, New Orleans and Nashville, among other blues depots. He visited black bards and white bluegrass pickers, underlining the multiple intersections which have continually characterized the supposedly "pure" subcultures in what Alan Lomax once called "this singing country." Cook, by knowing what questions to ask, even makes sense out of Charley Pride, the first black performer to become a country-and-western superstar.

At the end of his journey Cook observes that "there is a jackleg curriculum called American studies offered at most of our colleges and universities today. It is about equal parts literature and history, and purports to communicate something to students about the formation of the American character. That sounds skeptical, I know, but my doubts are not about substance but about sources."

Cook has reason to be skeptical because knowledge of such fundamental reflectors of the American character as the blues is in exceedingly short supply, and always has been, in our institutions of more or less higher learning. In any case it is to be hoped that *Listen to the Blues* will be added to the reading lists of American studies curricula. The publisher is to be commended, by the way, for having provided an index—a reference aid many publishers seem to consider too costly for books about "popular music," a term used derogatorily by far too many academicians who know a lot about Hawthorne and

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Melville but haven't the slightest idea who Robert Johnson was, and why. And if you don't know who Robert Johnson was, you need this book.

Nat Hentoff

The New Men

The Passion of Claude McKay, Selected Prose and Poetry, 1912-1948 edited by Wayne Cooper

(Schocken; $10.95)

Good Morning Revolution by Langston Hughes

(Lawrence Hill; $6.50)

The Old South by Arna Bontemps

(Dodd, Mead; $6.95)

This selection of certain published and unpublished works of Claude McKay (1889-1948) permits us to take a good second look at the Jamaican-American who was a moving force in the Negro Renaissance of the 1920s. The editor characterizes Claude McKay as a man of passion; he could also be referred to as a sensitive and compassionate man with a deep sense of moral integrity and in constant revolt against the evils of the establishment, one who dared to use his pen very early against social forces that degraded human beings.

The biographical data provided by Wayne Cooper permit us to see Claude McKay in a number of ways, in controversial relation to the black intelligensia (NAACP, Urban League); interacting with Communist ideology and Communists, and also with white liberals. No matter what the relationship, McKay held to his sense of self as a man, a writer and a critic. Cooper says: "He felt that subservience to Communist party discipline would limit his freedom and violate the integrity of his art." This statement is sharpy demonstrated in his letters, essays and poems.

Cooper has performed an invaluable service by putting at our disposal McKay's unpublished writings. There are letters to Max Eastman, James Ivy and W. E. B. DuBois, in which he reveals his inner feelings and his sensitivity to what he thinks to be the essence of true artistic creativity. To DuBois in 1928 (in reaction to criticism of *Home to Harlem* in the *Crisis)* McKay writes: "Finally, deep-sunk in depravity though it may be, the author of *Home to Harlem* prefers to remain unrepentant and unregenerate and he 'distinctly' is not grateful for any free baptism of grace in the cleansing pages of the *Crisis.*"

The collected poems, short stories and letters are a newly available record of the "passion" of Claude McKay who hated injustice because he loved people, who revolted against all brutality to which his people were subjected because he yearned for freedom and human dignity among all men.

Good Morning Revolution is a collection of selected articles, stories and poems by Langston Hughes. Most have not appeared in book form prior to Faith Berry's creative effort. The wealth of materials brings into sharp focus Hughes the poet, possessed of a powerful social, revolutionary vision, revolution in his work characterizing a creative concern for change in the social process that will guarantee maximum well-being for all men. Here the reader will see how he dared to dream of a sane society, how he focused his hope on creative change, how he yearned for humane treatment for blacks and other oppressed people.

Saunders Redding (in the foreword) reminds us that between the 1920s and the time of his death in 1967, "no poet caught with such sharp immediacy and intensity the humor and the pathos, the irony and the humiliation, the beauty and the bitterness of the experience of being a Negro in America" as did Hughes. No poet has evidenced deeper concern for the dignity of the masses, freedom, justice and the equality of the sons of man than he did.

The Old South is an appropriate title for this portrait of Southern life as experienced and understood by Arna Bontemps who demonstrates great skill in capturing its mood. The 12 short stories contain diverse nuances of black experiences during the 1930s. The language is simple; we get glimpses of black reality and the sensitivity of the writer as he identifies with it.

Aspects of this black reality, warm and human, are in "The Cure" in which Buddy Joe Ward succumbs to alcoholism because Boatman, a rich white man, has disrupted his love life with beautiful Elvirie Du Plaz. Another black reality is seen in "Talk to the Music" in which singer Mayme Dupree (she made no records, never visited Broadway, never knew the fame of Ma Rainey, Mayme Smith or Bessie Smith) achieves fame in a small Southern town. We see other aspects of this black reality in "Heathen at Home" in which Miss Abigale Conroy, finding herself on the brink of disgrace in marriage and separation, seeks to live therapeutically, giving herself to missionary education among poor Negroes of Alabama, but the black youth of this Alabama area come to suspect that she is "not for real." And there is "Saturday Night": the storyteller shows us a small Alabama community of the 1930s, mule carts and cars filled with country folks, going to town in search of the Saturday thrill. Life moves; the blacks take special notice of three Jews who act in strange ways toward them. But even the illiterate understand the dynamics of

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racism in Alabama.

The first part of the volume—"Why I Returned"—is a personal essay in which Bontemps tells why he went back to Louisiana after having spent considerable time in various parts of America. "I am staying in the South to write something about the Negro's awakening and regeneration. This is my theme, and this is where the action is." The 12 stories of this book are full of that action, grounded in imagery, emotion and potentially real-life situations.

The final section of the volume—"Pennies for Luck"—is also an essay of personal reflections, on his life as a boy of 10 and his early manhood in Louisiana, Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago. The creative encounters between father, son and grandmother come into such bright focus that the reader realizes Bontemps epitomized in his life and writings the value of the rare qualities of family affection.

James D. Tyms

No Wolfe Cub

Embarkation
by J. R. Salamanca

(Knopf; $6.95)

Goethe, who was fascinated with the image of the superior man long before Nietzsche gave him romantic and mystical trimmings and called him Zarathustra, believed that if we are strong-willed and know our goal people will step aside for us. In this novel Joel Linthicum, the boat-builder as artist, would pass any test for the superior man, even a weight-lifting test (at a Maryland oyster roast he wins a wager by mounting on his back a frightened and struggling pony), and his older son Aaron compares him with the Elizabethans. Most Englishmen and Americans today would be intimidated if a Drake or a Raleigh came swaggering among them, sea salt in his beard and blood on his hands. Aaron, the narrator of *Embarkation*, admits he's intimidated and his growing up—one of the major themes of the novel—is a quiet struggle to crawl out from under the shadow of a man who belongs to a time when there were giants in the earth.

Though Salamanca gave the title character of his best-selling novel *Lilith* a rich fantasy life, he is no maker of fantasies himself. *Lilith* was based on a year's work in an asylum and its success was owing not only to its Gothic atmosphere but also to its finespun details and its author's power in identifying with the occupational therapist who served as narrator. In *Embarkation* Salamanca draws on his hobby of sailing and offers evidence that he has poked around alertly in the shops of independent boat-builders whose craftsmanship is becoming obsolete as corporate competition drives them into retirement. Salamanca dipped into his own experiences as well for the coloring of the London scenes in which Aaron studies acting and senses amid doubts that he might become an artist too if a distinctly lesser one than his father. An enchanted London closer to Dickens' and G. K. Chesterton's vision than to Gissing's is Aaron's London and he sees it as a city touched with greatness by centuries of memorable history and literature. Whether he is describing London or the odds-against struggle of the Linthicums with a gale off the Maryland coast, Salamanca writes with a lyricism that persuaded a critic of his first novel, *The Lost Country*, to chide him as a Thomas Wolfe cub.

Salamanca differs from Wolfe, however, in ways important enough to indicate that he doesn't have to crawl out from under the shadow of *that* giant. Since *The Lost Country* he has been curbing a taste for verbiage and rhetoric and producing novels that have been *progressively* shorter. He is more inventive than Wolfe, never using nostalgia as an excuse for disguised and interminable autobiography. Most important, perhaps, he turns to mythology as Joyce and Faulkner and John Updike did before him but avoids the obtrusive parallels that become a wearisome trick in Updike's *The Centaur*. The Genesis story of Noah furnished Salamanca with hints for the primitive vigor and alternating scrupulousness and waywardness of Joel Linthicum. Having led a godly life before the flood, Noah slipped when he passed his 600th year and entered what psychologists would call

Compact

Rather than swig oil
Like a bottomless pit

Rather than eat people
Like a chrome coffin doing 90

Give me a small faucet,
One I can turn off and on
Easy as a button

And let it be said for once, for all
Bugs, crickets, beetles

What is so wonderful about me is that driving me
Man is not driven:

When a man steps inside me he is not entering safe Mother
Any more than he is losing himself inside selfish Cleopatra;

When a man steps inside me he is not permitted to wallow
Either in the soft rumble seat of his childhood
Or in the whitewalled stomach of greed

When a man steps inside me
What he finds is a tin bucket for carrying people
Exactly where they want to go

When a man steps inside me
Seeing I am neither mother nor mistress
But sister, friend, wife

What he finds is that my obsolescence lasts
Almost as long as his life.

PATRICIA GOEDICKE

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a critical age. He planted a vineyard, drank too much wine, collapsed naked on the floor of his tent, and was observed in this shameless state by his youngest son Ham. As Ham was shocked by the sight of the patriarch in disarray; so Joel's older son and daughter are shocked when they find their father carousing with a mistress abroad one of his boats.

Sylvie, the daughter, thereupon turns to man-hating as if it were a full-time occupation. When she finally accepts a lover, he is none other than a gentle professor at the state university who would seem incapable of the sexual demands habitual to Joel Linthicum. Aaron, also finding his adolescent innocence behind him like the lost country of Jim Blackstarr, hero of Salamanca's first novel, tries for a healthy relationship with the opposite sex—and fails repeatedly. Disaster of a simpler kind strikes at the younger son Jamed, who suffers brain damage as a result of an accident his father might have prevented.

Jamed's retardation intensifies his father's love. For Joel Linthicum, despite his preoccupation with building the soundest and most beautiful boats in the world, surpasses other men in emotional warmth as he surpasses them in prodigality of talents. Perhaps the most astonishing of these talents is his gift for drawing rarest beauty and power from Shakespearean verse as he floats out to sea and shouts his favorite lines for the wind's benefit and his own. Here again he demonstrates that he belongs to another day and that his vulgarity, which he shares with the bear-baiting Elizabethans, doesn't cut him off from the pleasures of the esthete.

Joel Linthicum is not entirely credible —no semi-mythic hero could be—if measured by the standards of realistic fiction. Since he is larger than life, it is appropriate that his end should be as mysterious as the deaths of King Arthur and Frederick Barbarossa. Even though rumor has it that he was trapped in an Atlantic storm while testing one of his boats, his corpse never comes to light. Whatever his fate, we can be sure that he met it with courage and perhaps nose-thumbing for good measure. Linthicum is above all a contrast to the anti-heroes that have long dominated fiction and an answer—if one is wanted —to the despair of the '70s. His delight in living and eagerness to take risks limit him as a human being only in that they prevent him from understanding what the whimpering of the J. Alfred Prufrocks is all about.

The artist as a comic hero rather than a sensitive plant on Shelley's model is an uncommon theme and it is handled by Salamanca with romantic overtones that would jar if his lyricism weren't under delicate control. In moving from the Gothicism of *Lilith* and the overinsistent sexuality of *A Sea Change*, he has arrived at an artistic maturity that puts *Embarkation* first among his works.

James Walt

Objective Critic

Radical Paradoxes: Dilemmas of the American Left, 1945-1970 by Peter Clecak

(Harper & Row; $11.95)

It may not be too simplistic to see the roots of the current feeble condition of our government in the radical movement of the '60s. To radical rhetoric the choice between presidential candidates in 1968 was no choice. Radicals and radical sympathizers abstained, and so Nixon won by a hair. In 1972 the insistence on purity by fringe radicals was influential in gaining the nomination for McGovern; and Nixon had his landslide. Most of the adults in this country have known about the deviousness of Nixon since the campaign of '52. Yet twice he has been elected President.

On the other hand Nixon has had a success in foreign affairs that might not have been so readily achieved by Humphrey or McGovern. Now he is paralyzed, and barely clings to the office, all very high irony; it goes to show how unpredictable are human affairs and history. That people and events often do not fulfill our expectations is a truth to be remembered if one cares about remaining in contact with reality. Because the radical movement of the '60s preferred fantasy and illusion, as Peter Clecak convincingly shows, it has now virtually disappeared as a political force. Fantasy and illusion may generate intimations of ecstasy but not tangible movement toward a better world. Progress in that direction can be made only by acknowledging that history does not follow any man's scenario, that all who are regarded as victims of alienation may not find their condition intolerable, that those who think of themselves as creators of the good society may be rejected by those who would most benefit, that even hard-won small successes are streaked with disappointment, that where human nature is concerned nothing can be said with finality. The radicals of the '60s searched for an ideology to give coherence to their deeply felt grievances, found many of their grievances articulated by an older generation of radicals, and made the same basic errors that had left their predecessors powerless.

In order to connect the past to their revulsion with the present and to an inspiring vision of the future, they reached for the closed systems of men who were prone to similar revulsion and inspiration, and in doing so they pulled the shades and blocked out of their world uncertainty, irony, paradox. Or as Clecak at one point in his analysis says, they made it impossible to differentiate what was the result of fate, or of will, or drift or thrust. Like their predecessors they would not see that the bad could do good, that the good could be brutal, that the route to the good society is, sadly, labyrinthine.

Peter Clecak is a fine example of Matthew Arnold's disinterested critic, able to distance himself from ideas, people, events that have played a large role in shaping his sensibility. He neither vindicates nor vaunts, but with the lesson of his failed subjects before him avoids assumptions and judgments. He sits on a perch and achieves a long view, seeing more than just the skirmishing guerrillas, seeing armies being mustered on the distant plain, the broad river separating Now from Utopia.

Clecak's purpose in this book is twofold. He delineates and comments on the ideas espoused by '60s radicals, and he shows the sources of these ideas in the work of four "plain Marxists" of an earlier generation. While he is highly critical of the radicals for their inability to recognize their paradoxical situation in American society, Clecak

To Our Readers

Next week is our winter holiday; there will be no issue of *The New Republic*. Publication will resume the following week, with the issue dated Jan. 19, 1974.

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nevertheless is not remiss in remarking the positive effects that the movement has had, the opening to question of the relations between the sexes, family structure, child rearing, education, the meaning of work.

But each of the four "plain Marxists" studied—C. Wright Mills, Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy and Herbert Marcuse—was a source of ideas for the radicals that ultimately limited their credibility and hence their power to bring about change. In the period since 1945 the plain Marxists, taken together, abandoned the medium-range objective of socialism and made the Communist society of perfected man a goal that could be achieved within history, within the foreseeable future. The abandonment of the earlier route to communism via socialism was primarily the result of disillusion with socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; socialism clearly was not leading to the development of a consciousness among the population that would make communism attainable. The ultimate goal for the plain Marxists has always been a society in which each contributed according to his ability and received the fruits of abundance according to his needs.

The problems faced by existing Socialist states, and the hardening of the principle of "to each according to his contribution," did not lead these Marxists to place the emergence of communism further back in time, but to move it forward. The effect was something of a surprise. To a generation of students suffering their own variety of alienation in large lecture halls at computerized universities, the appeal of a society in which alienation would be abolished was great. Whoever held out an image of true community where people cared and were gentle to each other was a hero. The old plain Marxists had not been able to find an admirable example of a Socialist state. Suddenly the development of Socialist consciousness could be bypassed; it was easier to go directly to communism.

C. Wright Mills' contribution to the radicals was the idea that power in bourgeois democracy resided with various elites, making real change within the system unlikely. Baran and Sweezy, who had predicted the collapse of the American system under the weight of its economic irrationality and who had been awaiting the birth of the new Communist man in the USSR, came to believe in the early '60s that in none of the advanced countries would it be possible for a Socialist ethic and spirit to grow. They thereupon designated "the exploited and impoverished masses at the peripheries" as the new "gravediggers of capitalisms." Cuba and China became shining examples. "Third World" and "armed struggle" became catchwords of radical youth.

One aspect of the Soviet betrayal for Sweezy is its use of material incentives; such incentives are not necessary for the creation of abundance. He prefers persuasion based on the praise of hard work. Sweezy thus never became as popular as Marcuse, who largely ignores the problem of scarcity.

For at least 30 years Marcuse has held to the view that only change leading directly to a society in which the spirit of man is freed of all alienation and repression is worth talking about. Until his "Essay on Liberation" (1968) Marcuse was extremely pessimistic, acknowledging that his good society in which there is no compulsion and in which work becomes play was far out of range. Through the years he remained steadfastly unwilling to settle for the less glorious vision of bourgeois or social democracy made less alienating and less repressive. Suddenly with the outburst of campus radicalism communism was within range. It was essential, however, that the allure of the going system be resisted. To vote for President was a betrayal of faith.

In the campus radical Marcuse detected an emerging transitional man, a new man who has come of age unscathed by repression. A defector from the middle or upper class, he has burst out of repressive patterns of family relationships, education and work. Transitional man, he has seized his freedom, all of it. He places demands on life that the old structures of advanced industrial society cannot satisfy. He is "*the* ferment of hope in the overpowering and stifling capitalist metropoles." He will work George Meany's vineyards and lead the masses to revolution.

Visionary ecstasy is no match for plodding reason. If it cannot simply sweep away what is, it will have its pleasure anyway. Earthbound, Clecak insists on the distinction between the historical and the utopian. He cannot see transitional man, or any man, who has experienced expulsion from the womb and who accepts his mortality liberating the rest of us, bringing us to that state where we will no longer be alienated or repressed. What after all does such liberation mean? That there will be a time and place where there will be no loneliness, no anguish, no rage, no betrayal of fondest wishes? While we live in the here and now why not aim for a decent society in which everyone will have good nutrition, housing, education, medical care and in which work if not transformed into play can at least be made meaningful? We know that such goals can be approached and that alienation, social repression, individual compulsiveness can thereby be lessened. Abstaining does not liberate, nor will it collapse the real into the heavenly—far from it.

Paul Marx

How the Blind

Cane or no
cane, nothing
left or right

to tap, here at
the steep curb,
how the blind

bear themselves:
standing from
the neck down

plumb as granite;
how, in sheer
necessity they

stand, their
bearings
lost, out

of every
depth save
courage,

perspective
unavail-
able, not

knowing who
is near them:
how we

wait for
some foreknown
inflection or

a stranger's
arm, for
someone, anyone

God knows, any
one
to steer them.

PHILIP BOOTH

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Who Are We?

Parenting by Sidney Cornelia Callahan

(Doubleday; $5.95)

Sidney Callahan says it's time for consciousness-raising for parents. So she has written a book about it, a good book with fresh ideas drawn from a rich background of sources and put down with insight, originality and determination. She begins her study with the question: "Who are we as American parents?" And her response lies in her recognition that the tone of our culture is set by families on the move, rootless and raising their own young to leave home.

Her theories are varied and challenging. She sees the family as weakened when political organizations are functioning well, but turning back to itself as refuge and strengthened when the authority of the state fails it. In another realm of thought she recognizes and wonders at the American tendency to select happy folk and fairy tales, myths and legends, for its children and to censor stories of fate and unredeemed suffering in favor of virtue triumphant, a choice which reveals a bias understandable in a people accustomed to lavish natural abundance and protected existence.

A good parent protects and nurtures his child, encourages, separates, and these concurrent processes shape a new personality, beget psychic life, create a new life-style—all the while parents learn and grow in the process. Sidney Callahan prefaces her survey of "What do good parents do?" by asserting that we know just enough about man to realize that all theories of human behavior belong more in the realm of ideology than science. Then she plunges in. Medical care, eating, sleeping, exercise, underprotection, overprotection, family attitudes, feelings, emotions, socializing (which intimately affect the psychic development of the child), parent-testing by children, peer relationships, all claim her attention.

She acknowledges that the average reader is rarely able to find his way through Montessori, Piaget, Gesell and company without help; therefore parent manuals serve a necessary purpose. But even the best of them distort or sin by omission. An example is the glaring sexism in some of the most popular works. Her protest bears heeding. In *How to Parent* Dr. Fitzhugh Dodson, one of the big four writers of parent manuals, cautions fathers to exhibit tenderness toward their little girls in order to encourage "coquettishness and femininity." And both Dr. Spock and Dr. Ginott project the need to reassure little girls who might be disappointed to discover that something is missing. Ye gods.

Sidney Callahan discusses "Parent-Child Politics," by which she means everything outside the family involved in the parent-child process, the power, coercion, rights, duties which bear upon the lives of parents and children—whether relative to parents protecting children from the group, the community, the state, the world (for which in the end they are preparing them), or institutions or state, protecting the child from the parent. With respect to schools, a policy of "instrusive support" works best, she feels—parents who are on the scene, willing to work for the improvement of the schools, yet also alert to abuses and to the justified use of parent power. Parents should be aware of existing laws protecting children, if necessary lobby for the civil rights of children, and overcome their tendency to be cowed by the professionals for whose services they contract.

Asking "Are parents born or made?" and "Does sex make a difference?", Sidney Callahan turns to research on the history of parenting from primates to man, to the classic works in the field of human behavior, and concludes, "If we maintain the primacy of psyche and learning in man, when we ask whether sex determines parenting, we can say that neither males or females are innately programmed to parenthood nor do they inherit distinct styles of parenting . . . Parenting is mostly learned from identification with models." Her comments on the familiar assumptions respecting male vs. female qualities of parenting are especially good.

As for the future test-tube babies, communal child-rearing, the demise of the family (which she feels would only be reinvented), she speaks movingly of those qualities of human parenting so crucial to the survival of the race, and soberly of the dangers of technology because it interferes so violently with the psychic relationships necessary to good pairing and parenting. She foresees no radical change in biological parenthood, but instead a higher concentration on the rearing of fewer children, an awareness that of all the tasks of man, people-raising has first priority.

There is one shortcoming to this excellent book. One wishes that the author's rather technical jargon of expertise might be translated so that all parents, particularly those "average readers" she serves so well with much of her other writing, would find it easier to read this one.

Mary Reed Newland

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Fine Print

Doris Grumbach

After almost half a year on the receiving end of the book industry I am now full of observations and conclusions about the "trade," some reservations, a few strong feelings. It might be a good time to divest myself of all of these, before the new year is much further under way, and before the spring thaw and consequent avalanche of books change my perspective.

Observations: New York is no longer the exclusive fulcrum and center of trade-book publishing. *Publishers Weekly* recently surveyed the Midwest and found numerous flourishing publishing houses—more than 60 by my count—located in the central states, many of them in Chicago. This speaks partly to the size of the readership in that area, certainly influences the choice of books published. One finds that the lists contain titles by Midwestern columnists and cartoonists, as well as books of special appeal to residents of the region.

Equally significant is the number of excellent, small, less well known publishing companies all over the country doing quality printing and publishing. Sun Valley Press (Croton-on-Hudson, NY), Scrimshaw Press (San Francisco), Stephen Greene (Brattleboro, Vt.), Open Court (La Salle, Ill.) which is not new (1887) but this year has moved solidly into general trade publishing with a first-rate list—the names are many, but this is enough to show that out-of-New York publishing is of growing importance.

Another observation: the kinds of books we are now seeing from the university presses. Everyone is aware of the hard times these presses have been going through, despite their nonprofit, university-connected status. Some of these have given up their ghosts, others are struggling along with dimininished support from their universities, and many have shortened their lists. What I see from my end is that one solution to the problem of operating costs, sales loss, and fall-off in support from the university budget is, often, a change in the nature of the books published. This change, while potentially profitable, is received with raised eyebrows by the commercial houses who find their books in direct competition with some of those of the university presses. More and more *general* books are coming from them, books of wider appeal than the ones we are accustomed to seeing. The elegant *Illustrated Thoreau* (Princeton University Press) mentioned in this column a few weeks ago is a case in point. Minus its scholarly apparatus it became a fine gift book for Christmas buying and giving, no longer merely of interest to Thoreau scholars because of its authoritative text. The University of Illinois Press has a volume that is going well with the tide of women's lib books: *The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes Toward Women.* The University of Chicago Press will have a well illustrated reprint of essays on great men of our age by Winston Churchill, *Great Contemporaries.* Fairleigh Dickinson University Press' contribution to the women's shelves is a simply written, readable *Five for Freedom: A Study of Feminism in Fiction* by Geoffrey Wagner.

Enough. The point is that much of what these presses are now publishing differs from their original output which was books that were special in subject matter, scholarly, too lacking in general appeal for the trade to issue. Now they are widening their appeal and will sell more, no doubt, but may possibly also open themselves to the accusation that they are operating in the general field with the advantage their tax-exempt status gives them.

Finally I am aware, as everyone must be who opens the brown mailing envelopes every day, that there has been no noticeable falling-off in numbers of books published despite higher costs,

To Close a House (for C. H.)

To close a house
is to be more sure of distance;
to measure off the days we did not count,
the length of rugs, of ivy vines, the tensile strength
of words that form the linkage we have left.

We have packed and shipped what's over.
Your goldfish swim in their traveling pail,
the phone in a disordered sleep. Disconnected thoughts
pull in and out: I have turned off the gas;
the bills are paid; the clock

ticks off the space I've yet to move in.
Like a child, I try to adjust my pulse,
my breathing. I say your name
in the rhythm of its beat. A last time
I turn the kitchen faucet. The old leak

still gathers—a globe that forms and falls.
I wait to see it shatter, but the water holds,
the ticking holds; I cannot hear my heart.

The house is closed and I must be the mover,
the pendulum that changes space to time.
I breathe and hunt a span to hold me.
I move my hands;
I start the clock.

SONIA GERNES

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paper shortages, etc. Whether this will come in the year ahead no one seems to be willing to guess. But if it does it can only be to the good of the consumer. Just as there are educators of the opinion that too many unqualified people go to college for the wrong reasons, unworthily, I am of the opinion that too many books are published, too many forests go down to extinction to make possible too much useless, pointless, valueless, expendable, expeditious publishing. Victor Navasky in a recent *New York Times* column says that to publish fewer books is no solution; it would result, he says, "not in fewer 'anothers' but in fewer good books, since they are often the ones with least advance prospect for making money." This would be a good point if it were true, but he then goes on to cite the "reasonably good" books of this year which are selling very well (Hellman's *Pentimento*, Fraser's *Cromwell*, Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, Nicolson's *Portrait of a Marriage*, Greene's *Honorary Consul*, etc., etc.). These *were* predictable, both for critical acclaim and sales. More such acumen, and more restraint about what is clearly filling press-time or gambling on some curious quirk of the buying public, or worse, creating and sustaining buyers for instant books or perishable, profitable junk, would, it seems to me, benefit the industry and the consumer, and make more meaningful the whole art of publishing.

Reservations: Besides those I have foolhardedly put down about publishing, let me state some about reviewing. First there is the growing shortage of nationwide places in which reviews appear. More and more book advertisers are forced to the same few references for blurbs, among them *PW* and the *Library Journal*, which have the advantage of appearing with their comments months (often) before the books and which are (often) because of their close connection to the trade too kind to many books they review. Readers have expressed doubt to me about the ads they read which quote regularly these journals plus the *Times* and a few (two or three) others. The day seemingly has passed for the decision to buy a book because a critic whose views one trusts recommends it, and that is too bad. The increasing disappearance of space in which books are reviewed seriously means that fewer books of worth will receive their due notice, fewer first novelists and poets will get an audience. It may be true, as Robert Gottlieb of Knopf says, that "real writing will almost always prevail," but it will require winnowing the chaff from the grain by astute publishers (who will refuse to publish the chaff), and published critical notice of the grain. It's always possible that the genuine nourishment will be buried under the nonsustenance of junk—or silence.

Strong Feelings: I have come to hate books that are rushed to press to follow a trend—whether it be black or sexist or ecological or Watergated—because so much of it is poor, hastily written and edited and so clearly prematurely birthed. I think that books which pushed Watergate into their last chapters at the last moment were weakened, and those which cull women from their context and make them *Ding an sichs* are wrongheaded, and those which overvalue and overestimate black contributions out of zealousness do a disservice to the real black contributions to our culture.

I find pornographic publication increasingly unvarying and boring, and to that I add all the confessional literature by homosexuals and the recently divorced, happy and unhappy hookers, parents of defective children, near-suicides, drug addicts, prison dwellers (and their fiction and art), dope addicts, day-care center operators, successful reporters, columnists, presidential-campaign followers. I suspect this next year will be the Year of the Bug and we will be hearing from everyone in any way remotely connected with the recent unpleasantness in the capital, and I, for one, am already tired of it.

But there is this: with all my feelings about what is published and how much, there are the undeniable pleasures that linger in this business, the pleasures of discovery of a writer whom I didn't know about, now do, and will therefore always watch for, the pleasures of renewal of acquaintance with the superior ones who continue to please year after year, and the shock of recognition which comes every now and then in the presence of a great talent engaged in his craft of creating or revitalizing our vision of the world. For that alone, I hereby forgive and absolve all the callous, the money-grubbing, the profiteering, the ill-advised, the diarrhetic and logorrheic publishing, and welcome another year full of possibility and potential discovery among the brown-paper mailing envelopes.

Kauffmann, *from page 16*

gent boredom is a lot more palatable and potentially fertile than the stale traditional boredom that the New Phoenix Repertory Company is inflicting on 10 American cities this season. Last year I saw their miserable production of Molière's *Dom Juan*, the sort of good-for-you show that students are taken to and that browns them off on classic plays for life. This year I've seen two of their three new productions, each of which manages to be a different kind of resounding failure.

The first is Friedrich Duerrenmatt's *The Visit*, first done here in 1958 with Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt under Peter Brook's direction. The New Phoenix is using the same Maurice Valency version apparently sweetened from the original (called in German *Visit of the Old Lady*). But Valency is hardly responsible for the fact that this play has a beginning and an end but no middle. At the beginning a fantastically rich widow returns to the town where she was humiliated as a girl and promises the impoverished town a fortune if they will kill the man who once seduced her. At the end they kill the man, their neighbor and friend; she pays and leaves. Between those two points we watch the inevitable happen slowly and uninterestingly.

If that was true with the rich personalities of Fontanne and Lunt and the clever trickeries of Brook, it is tenfold true here. The man is played by John McMartin, the closest thing to a zombie on the American stage. The woman is played by Rachel Roberts, the British actress who has been excellent in limited proletarian roles (as in the film *This Sporting Life*) but who has absolutely none of the stature or elegance required here. The director, Harold Prince, could at least have kept her from slouching grubbily and speaking stridently, but Prince handles all the direction so ineptly that his failure with Roberts is not surprising. Edward Burbridge's scenery is egregiously ugly and inappropriate.

The other production is Georges Feydeau's *Chemin de Fer*, not my favorite of

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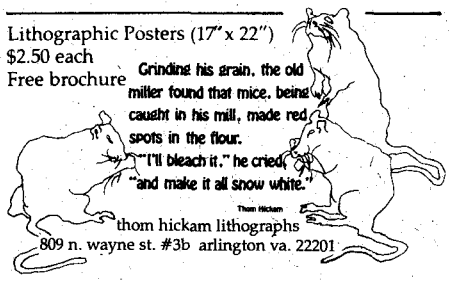

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the Feydeau farces I know, still a wonderfully sturdy 19th-century comic engine. It's well designed, directorially, by Stephen Porter, but Porter simply doesn't have the actors to execute his designs adequately. Again John McMartin is an ambulatory vacuum in a leading role. Rachel Roberts has more vigor here but is coarse. Only Richard Venture as her cuckolded husband has good control and comic coloring. The rest go through Porter's intricate physical patterns mechanically and with patently pumped-up spirit.

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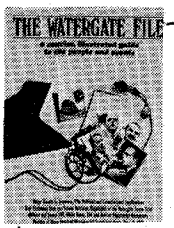

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